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THE
COMPLETE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS

THE
COMPLETE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS

(SELF-INTERPRETING)

ILLUSTRATED WITH SIXTY ETCHINGS
AND WOOD CUTS, MAPS AND FACSIMILES



VOLUME II

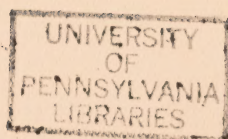
PART II

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PROSE WORKS.

(4) TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND, EDINBURGH.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

WISH me luck, dear Richmond ! Armour has just brought me a fine boy and girl at one throw. God bless the little dears !

' Green grow the rashes, O,
Green grow the rashes, O,
A feather bed is no sae saft,
As the bosoms o' the lasses, O.'

ROBT. BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, }
Sunday, 3rd Sep. 1786. }

An arrangement by compromise was come to betwixt the poet's family and the Armours (somewhat corresponding with the famous "Judgment of Solomon") whereby the twin-burden was divided equally between the two hitherto contending families—the girl was retained and nursed by Jean, while the boy was sent to Mossiel to be reared by *pap and spoon* under the care of the poet's mother and sisters.

(2) TO MR. ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK.

WITH A COPY OF "THE CALF."

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MOSSGIEL, *Friday Morning*,
[Sep. 8th 1786.]

MY FRIEND AND BROTHER.—Warm recollections of an absent friend presses so hard upon my heart, that I send him the prefixed bagatelle, pleased with the thought that it will greet the man of my bosom, and be a kind of distant language of friendship.

You will have heard that poor Armour has repaid me double. A very fine boy and a girl have awakened a thought and feelings that thrill, some with tender pressure, and some with foreboding anguish, through my soul.

The poem was nearly an extemporaneous production, on a wager with Mr. Hamilton that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time.

If you think it worth while, read it to Charles [Samson], and Mr. W. Parker; and if they choose a copy of it, it is at their service, as they are men whose friendship I shall be proud to claim, both in this world and that which is to come.

I believe all hopes of staying at home will be abortive, but more of this when, in the latter part of next week, you shall be troubled with a visit from—my dear Sir, your most devoted,

R. B.

The following letter of Dr. Thomas Blacklock, the blind poet of Edinburgh, being of so much consequence in this part of the Biography of Burns, cannot well be omitted here. Dr. Lawrie would seem to have retained it in his possession for at least a fortnight before he sent it, or a copy thereof, to Mr. Hamilton, in order that it might be handed to Burns. We have seen, in the last letter to Muir, that the poet proposed

to be in Kilmarnock about the middle of September, during which visit, it is supposed he composed "Tam Samson's Elegy." Before the end of that month he is again found at Mossgiel.

TO MR. GEORGE LAWRIE, V.D.M.,

ST. MARGARET'S HILL, KILMARNOCK.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDIN., *Sep. 4th* 1786.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I ought to have acknowledged your favor long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and perhaps one of the most genuine, entertainments of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the Poems; at last, however, I have finished that pleasing perusal. Many instances have I seen of Nature's force and beneficence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages; but none equal to that with which you have been kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humor in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased. It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that agreeable intention.

Mr. Stewart, Professor of Morals in this University, had formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers; but whether this was done or not I could never learn. I have little intercourse with Dr. Blair, but will take care to have the Poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. It has been told me by a gentleman to whom I shewed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardor, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It were, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed; as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertion of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than any thing of the kind which has been published within my memory.

T. BLACKLOCK.

(⁵) TO MR. JAMES BURNES, WRITER,
MONTROSE.

(CHAMBERS, 1840.*)

MOSSGIEL, *Tuesday, noon,*
Sep. 26, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,—I this moment receive yours—receive it with the honest, hospitable warmth of a friend's welcome. Whatever comes from you wakens always up the better blood about my heart, which your kind little recollections of my Parental Friend carries as far as it will go. 'Tis there, that man is blest! 'Tis there, my friend, man feels a consciousness of something within him above the trodden clod! The grateful reverence to the hoary earthly authors of his being—the burning glow when he clasps the woman of his soul to his bosom—the tender yearnings of heart for the little angels to whom he has given existence—these Nature has poured in milky streams about the human heart; and the man who never rouses them to action by the inspiring influences of their proper objects, loses by far the most pleasurable part of his existence.

My departure is uncertain, but I do not think it will be till after harvest. I will be on very short allowance of time indeed, if I do not comply with your friendly invitation. When it will be, I don't know; but if I can make my wish good I will endeavor to drop you a line some time before. My best compliments to Mrs. Burness; I should be equally mortified should I drop in when she is abroad, but of that I suppose there is little chance.

What I have wrote, heaven knows; I have not

* The original MS. of this letter we believe to be in the Arbroath Museum.

time to review it, so accept of it in the beaten way of friendship. With the ordinary phrase, and perhaps rather more than the ordinary sincerity—I am, dear Sir, ever yours,

R. B.

TO MRS. STEWART OF STAIR,

ON THE EVE OF MY INTENDED GOING TO JAMAICA.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[*Close of Sep., or beginning of Oct.*]

MADAM,—The hurry of my preparations for going abroad has hindered me from performing my promises so soon as I intended. I have here sent you a parcel of songs, &c., which never made their appearance, except to a friend or two at most. The song, to the tune of *Ettrick Banks*, you will easily see the impropriety of exposing much, even in manuscript.* I think, myself, it has some merit; both as a tolerable description of one of nature's sweetest scenes, a July evening; and one of the finest pieces of nature's workmanship, the finest indeed we know anything of—an amiable, beautiful young woman: but I have no common friend to procure me that permission, without which I would not dare to spread the copy.

I am quite aware, Madam, what task the world would assign me in this letter. The obscure bard, when any of the great condescend to take notice of him, should heap the altar with the incense of flattery. Their high ancestry, their own great and godlike qualities and actions, should be recounted with the most exaggerated description. This, Madam, is a task for which I am altogether unfit. Besides a certain disqualifying pride of heart, I know nothing of your

* The Song addressed to Miss Alexander, Ballochmyle.

connections in life, and have no access to where your real character is to be found—the company of your compeers : and more, I am afraid that even the most refined adulation is by no means the road to your good opinion.

One feature of your character I shall ever with grateful pleasure remember ; the reception I got when I had the honor of waiting on you at Stair. I am little acquainted with politeness, but I know a good deal of benevolence of temper, and goodness of heart. Surely, did those in exalted stations know how happy they could make some classes of their inferiors by condescension and affability, they would never stand so high, measuring out with every look the height of their elevation, but condescend as sweetly as did Mrs. Stewart of Stair.

R. B.

Katherine Gordon, heiress of Afton in New Cumnock, was married on 1st Feb. 1770 to Alexander (afterwards Major-General) Stewart. Stair house, with its grounds picturesquely situated on the river Ayr, some three miles below Barskimming, was purchased from the Stair family, and continued to be the residence of Mrs. and Major Stewart for upwards of twenty years, and there all their children—five in number—were born. They afterwards sold Stair House, which, after passing through several hands, was repurchased by the late Earl of Stair, who got the estate secured to his descendants by an entail. Major-General Stewart M.P., who was also Colonel of the 2nd Regiment of Foot, died at London in December 1794, aged 53, just six months after the marriage of his eldest daughter Catherine to Wm. Cunningham Esq. of Enterkin. After parting with Stair, Mrs. Stewart erected a new mansion on a portion of the Enterkin estate, bought for the purpose, and named her new residence “Afton Lodge.” She died there in January 1818, having survived her daughter Mrs. Cunningham by seven or eight years. The family record from which the above particulars are derived, says “She was buried in Stair Churchyard—a daughter on each side of her.”

The “parcel of Songs, &c.” which accompanied the letter that forms the text, consisted of the following eight pieces,

and have been called "The Stair MSS." to distinguish them from the "Afton MSS."

1. Original draft of "The Vision," unabridged as at first composed.
2. Song—"The Lass of Ballochmyle—tune, *Ettrick Banks*."
3. Song—"The gloomy night is gathering fast."
4. Song—"My Nanie, O."
5. Song—"Handsome Nell—the author's first attempt in verse."
6. "Song in the character of a ruined farmer."
7. Song—"Tho' cruel Fate should bid us part."
8. Poem—"Misgivings of Dependency on the approach of the Gloomy Monarch of the Grave."

On the death of Mr. Dick, bookseller in Ayr, who had purchased this interesting lot from Mrs. Stewart's grandson, his representatives could not arrange to have them preserved entire. The pieces were dissevered and shared piecemeal: ultimately the separate poems reached the auction-room, and were there dispersed. Even the long poem of *The Vision* has been cut up into sub-divisions, and the dismembered sections are now owned by far-removed possessors.

(²) TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., WRITER, AYR.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[*About 8th October 1786.*]

SIR,—I was with Wilson, my printer, t'other day, and settled all our by-gone matters between us. After I had paid him all demands, I made him the offer of the second edition, on the hazard of being paid out of *the first and readiest*, which he declines. By his account, the paper of a thousand copies would cost about twenty-seven pounds, and the printing about fifteen or sixteen: he offers to agree to this for the printing, if I will advance for the paper, but this, you know, is out of my power; so farewell hopes of a second edition till I grow richer! an epoch, which, I think, will arrive at the payment of the British National Debt.

There is scarcely anything hurts me so much in being disappointed of my second edition, as not having

it in my power to shew my gratitude to Mr. Ballantine, by publishing my poem of *The Brigs of Ayr*. I would detest myself as a wretch, if I thought I were capable in a very long life of forgetting the honest, warm, and tender delicacy, with which he enters into my interests. I am sometimes pleased with myself in my grateful sensations : but, I believe, on the whole, I have very little merit in it, as my gratitude is not a virtue, the consequence of reflection ; but sheerly the instinctive emotion of a heart, too inattentive to allow worldly maxims and views to settle into selfish habits.

I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within, respecting the Excise. There are many things plead strongly against it ; the uncertainty of getting soon into business ; the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home ; and besides I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society, or the vagaries of the muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad, and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances everything that can be laid in the scale against it.

You may perhaps think it an extravagant fancy, but it is a sentiment which strikes home to my very soul ; though sceptical in some points of our current belief, yet I think I have every evidence for the reality of a life beyond the stinted bourne of our present existence : if so, then how should I, in the presence of that tremendous Being, the Author of ex-

istence, how should I meet the reproaches of those who stand to me in the dear relation of children, whom I deserted in the smiling innocence of helpless infancy? O thou unknown Power! thou Almighty God who hast lighted up reason in my breast, and blessed me with immortality! I have frequently wandered from that order and regularity necessary for the perfection of thy works, yet thou hast never left me nor forsaken me!

.

Since I wrote the foregoing sheet, I have seen something of the storms of mischief thickening over my folly-devoted head. Should you, my friend, my benefactor, be successful in your applications for me, perhaps it may not be in my power in that way to reap the fruit of your friendly efforts. What I have written in the preceding pages is the settled tenor of my present resolution; but should inimical circumstances forbid me closing with your kind offer, or enjoying it only threaten to entail further misery.

.

To tell the truth, I have little reason for this last complaint; as the world, in general, has been kind to me fully up to my deserts. I was, for some time past, fast getting into the pining, distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart and inoffensive manners, (which last, by the bye, was rather more than I could well boast;) still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be *done*. When all my school-fellows and youthful compeers (those misguided few

excepted, who joined, to use a Gentoo phrase, the *hallachores* of the human race) were striking off with eager hope and earnest intent, in some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was 'standing idle in the market place,' or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt from whim to whim.

You see, Sir, that if to *know* one's errors were a probability of *mending* them, I stand a fair chance: but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it.

(²) TO JOHN MACKENZIE, ESQ., SURGEON,
MAUCHLINE,

ENCLOSING VERSES ON DINING WITH LORD DAER.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

Wednesday Morning, [1st Nov. 1786.]

DEAR SIR,—I never spent an afternoon among great folks with half that pleasure as when, in company with you, I had the honor of paying my devoirs to that plain, honest, worthy man, the Professor: I would be delighted to see him perform acts of kindness and friendship, though I were not the object; he does it with such a grace.

I think his character, divided into ten parts, stand thus:—four parts Socrates—four parts Nathanael—and two parts Shakespeare's Brutus.

The foregoing verses were really extempore, but a little corrected since. They may entertain you a little with the help of that partiality with which you are so good as to favor the performances of, Dear Sir, your very humble servant,

R. B.



Mrs. Dunlop.

OF DUNLOP.

(1) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[November 1786.]

MADAM,—I am truly sorry I was not at home yesterday when I was so much honored with your order for my copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you were pleased to pay to my poetic abilities.* I am fully persuaded there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the titillations of applause as the sons of Parnassus: nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor bard dances with rapture, when those, whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges, honor him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, Madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-chord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the Saviour of his Country.

“Great patriot hero! ill-requited chief!”

The first book I met with in my early years, which I perused with pleasure, was “The life of Hannibal:” the next was “The History of Sir William Wallace:” for several of my earlier years I had few other authors; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious, but unfortunate stories. In those boy-

* Gilbert has left on record that his brother “was on the point of setting out for Edinburgh before Mrs. Dunlop had heard of him. She had been afflicted with a long and severe illness when a copy of the printed poems was laid on her table by a friend, and happening to open on *The Cotter’s Saturday Night*, she read it over with the greatest pleasure and surprise. Mrs. Dunlop sent off a person express to Mossgiel, a distance of fifteen or sixteen miles, with a very obliging letter to my brother, desiring him to send her half-a-dozen copies of the poems if he had them to spare, and begging he would do her the pleasure of calling at Dunlop House as soon as convenient.”

ish days I remember, in particular, being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur—

“Syne to the Leglen wood, when it was late,
To make a silent and a safe retreat.”

I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen of miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood,* with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto; and, as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect (for even then I was a rhymers) that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merits. R. B.

{¹) TO MR. ARCHIBALD LAWRIE, NEWMILNS.†

(BLACKIE'S "LAND OF BURNS," 1840.)

MOSSGIEL, 13th November 1786.

DEAR SIR,—I have, along with this, sent two volumes of Ossian, with the remaining volume of the songs. Ossian I am not in such a hurry about; but I wish the songs, with the volume of the Scotch poets, as soon as they can conveniently be despatched. If they are left at Mr. Wilson the bookseller's shop in Kilmarnock, they will easily reach me.

My most respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrie, and a poet's warmest wishes for their happiness to the young ladies, particularly the fair musician, whom I think much better qualified than ever David was, or could be, to charm an evil spirit out of Saul.

* Leglen Wood is situated in the heart of a peninsula, formed by a peculiar bend of the river Ayr, near Auchencruive. The distance is here measured from Mount Oliphant.

† Son of the parish minister of Loudon, to whom Dr. Blacklock wrote the letter given at page 201, *supra*.

Indeed, it needs not the feelings of a poet to be interested in the welfare of one of the sweetest scenes of domestic peace and kindred love that ever I saw ; as I think the peaceful unity of St. Margaret's Hill can only be excelled by the harmonious concord of the Apocalyptic Zion.

R. B.

(²) TO MONS^R. ARCHIBALD LAWRIE,

COLLINE DE ST. MARGARETE.

(BLACKIE'S "LAND OF BURNS," 1840.)

MAUCHLINE, 15th November 1786.

DEAR SIR,—If convenient, please return me by Connel, the bearer, the two volumes of Songs I left last time I was at St. Margaret's Hill.

My best compliments to all the good family. *A Dieu je vous commende.*

ROBT. BURNS.

(³) TO MR. ROBT. MUIR, KILMARNOCK.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MY DEAR SIR,—Inclosed you have "Tam Samson," as I intend to print him. I am thinking for my Edinburgh expedition on Monday or Tuesday come se'ennight, for pos. I will see you on Tuesday first. I am ever, your much indebted,

ROBT. BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, 18th Nov^r. 1786.

TO MISS WILHELMINA ALEXANDER,
INCLOSING A SONG INSPIRED BY HER CHARMS.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

MOSSGIEL, 18th Nov., 1786.

MADAM,—Poets are such outré beings, so much the children of wayward fancy and capricious whim, that I believe the world generally allows them a larger latitude in the rules of propriety, than the sober sons of judgment and prudence. I mention this as an apology for the liberties that a nameless stranger has taken with you in the enclosed poem, which he begs leave to present to you. Whether it has poetical merit any way worthy of the theme, I am not the proper judge ; but it is the best my abilities can produce ; and what to a good heart will, perhaps, be a superior grace, it is equally sincere as fervent.

The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, Madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *Reveur* as he wandered by you. I had roved out as chance directed, in the favorite haunts of my muse—the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The sun was flaming over the distant western hills ; not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavor to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and rob you of all the property nature gives you—

your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way, what heart at such a time but must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely-browsing cattle, or the withering eastern blast? Such was the scene, and such the hour, when in a corner of my prospect, I spied one of the finest pieces of Nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape, or blest a poet's eye—those visionary bards excepted who hold commerce with ærial beings! Had Calumny and Villainy taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object.

What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain dull historic prose to metaphor and measure.

The enclosed song was the work of my return home, and perhaps but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene. I am going to print a second edition of my Poems, but cannot insert these verses without your permission. I have the honor to be, Madam, your most obedient and very humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

WELL, Mr. Burns, and *did* the lady give you the desired permission? No! She was too fine a lady to notice so plain a compliment. As to her great brothers whom I have since met in life on more equal terms of respectability*—Why should I quarrel their want of attention to me? When Fate swore that their purses should be full, Nature was equally positive that their heads should be empty. Men of their fashion were surely incapable of being unpolite? “Ye canna mak a silk-purse o’ a sow’s lug.”

R. B., 1792.

* In particular (as the reader will afterwards see) he, as Depute Master of St. James' Lodge, Tarbolton, admitted Claude Alexander, Esq., of Ballochmyle, on 25th July 1787, an Honorary member of the Lodge, in company with Brother Professor Stewart of Catrine, and other gentlemen of distinction.

The reader will understand that the foregoing letter, which enclosed the song called "The Lass of Ballochmyle" to the lady who formed the main subject of it, is here printed, not from Currie's edition, but from the poet's own transcript of it in the Glenriddell volume of his letters, preserved in the Liverpool Athenæum Library. The author's characteristic note appended to it was for the first time published in Mr. Douglas's edition, 1877.

The veritable letter with the song which the poet transmitted to the "Lass of Ballochmyle" now hangs for the inspection of visitors in the main parlor of the farm-house of Mossgiel, near Mauchline. See Song, Vol. 1, p. 322.

(²) TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ., BANKER, AYR,

ENCLOSING THE POEM CALLED, "A WINTER NIGHT."

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

SIR,—Enclosed you have my first attempt in that irregular kind of measure in which many of our finest Odes are wrote. How far I have succeeded, I don't know, but I shall be happy to have your opinion on Friday first (24th Nov.) when I intend being in Ayr.

I hear of no returns from Edinburgh to Mr. Aiken respecting my second edition business, so I am thinking to set out beginning of next week for the City myself. If my first poetic patron, Mr. Aiken, is in town, I want to get his advice, both in my procedure and some little criticism affairs much, if business will permit you to honor me with a few minutes when I come down on Friday. I have the honor to be, Sir, your much indebted humble Serv^t.

ROBERT BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, 20th Nov., 1788.

The history of the above interesting relic of the Bard is very curious, and we are indebted to Dr. Carruthers of Inverness for its appearance here. He obtained it from his much lamented deceased friend, Colonel Francis Cunningham (youngest son of the famous Allan) who, shortly before his

death in 1875, had copied it from a lady's album in Boulogne-sur-mer, in which the precious holograph was enshrined. The poem referred to did not accompany the letter; but from the description given—"my first attempt in that irregular kind of measure"—it could be no other than the one we have ventured to indicate, and which was first published in the author's Edinburgh edition, 1787.

IN THE NAME OF THE NINE, AMEN

(CURRIE, 1800.)

WE, Robert Burns, by virtue of a warrant from Nature, bearing date the twenty-fifth of January, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine, Poet Laureat and Bard-in-Chief, in and over the districts and countries of Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick, of old extent, To our trusty and well-beloved William Chalmers and John M'Adam, Students and Practitioners in the ancient and mysterious Science of Con-founding Right and Wrong.

RIGHT TRUSTY:

Be it known unto you, that whereas, in the course of our care and watchings over the order and police of all and sundry the manufacturers, retainers, and venders of Poesy; bards, poets, poetasters, rhymers, jinglers, songsters, ballad-singers, &c., &c., &c., male and female—We have discovered a certain nefarious, abominable, and wicked song or ballad, a copy whereof we have enclosed; * Our Will therefore is, that Ye pitch upon and appoint the most execrable individual of that most execrable species, known by the appellation, phrase, and nick-name of "the Deil's Yell Nowte:" †

* Cunningham explains this as alluding to "Holy Willie's Prayer;" we, with the light of later discoveries, believe it to refer to the "Minutes of the Court of Equity." See p. 399, Vol. I.—J. H.

† Explained by Currie to be Old Bachelors; by Gilbert Burns to be Sheriff-Officers.

and after having caused him to kindle a fire at the Cross of Ayr, ye shall, at noontide of the day, put into the said wretch's merciless hands the said copy of the said nefarious and wicked song, to be consumed by fire in the presence of all beholders, in abhorrence of, and terrorem to, all such compositions and composers. And this in nowise leave ye undone, but have it executed in every point as this Our Mandate bears, before the twenty-fourth current, when in person We hope to applaud your faithfulness and zeal.

Given at Mauchline this twentieth day of November, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six.
 GOD SAVE THE BARD!

Our Bard's head-quarters are now to be shifted from Moss-giel and Mauchline to Edinburgh; and before quitting Ayrshire at this time, we shall, for the sake of those readers who are partial to Free-masonry, record a few jottings taken from the Books of St. James' Lodge, Tarbolton, bearing upon the poet's connexion therewith, down to the close of the year 1786. The earliest existing entry in which his name appears in a Minute dated

July 27th, 1784, which he signs in his official capacity. The body of the minute refers to

" Brother Robert Burness, Depute Master,
 Brother Wilson, Secretary, and
 Capt. James Montgomerie, G. M."

" *Tarbolton, June 29th, 1785.*—This night the Lodge met and inspected the Incidental Charges of the Lodge, and find them to amount to the sum of three pounds, nineteen shillings and three farthings Sterling, which they order their Treasurer to pay to Brother Robert Woodrow, who is to settle the same.

ROBERT BURNESS, *D. M.*

P. S.—The Lodge unanimously agree, according to their rules, to exclude John Hihat, a late brother. R. B., *D.M.*

Minute, dated Tarbolton,	2d Aug ^t .	1785, signed Rob ^t . Burness, <i>D.M.</i>
" "	Tarbolton, 18th Aug ^t .	1785, " Rob ^t . Burness, <i>D.M.</i>
" "	Tarbolton, 7th Sep ^t .	1785, " Rob ^t . Burness, <i>D.M.</i>
" "	Tarbolton, 15th Sep ^t .	1785, " Rob ^t . Burness, <i>D.M.</i>
" "	Tarbolton, 26th Oct ^r .	1785, " Rob ^t . Burness, <i>D.M.</i>
" "	Tarbolton, 10th Nov ^r .	1785, " Rob ^t . Burness, <i>D.M.</i>

Minute, dated	Mauchline,	1st Decr.	1785,	signed	Robt. Burness,	<i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Tarbolton,	7th Decr.	1785,	"	Robt. Burness, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Tarbolton,	7th Janr.	1786,	"	Robt. Burness, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	* Tarbolton,	1st March	1786,	"	Robt. Burness, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Mauchline,	25th May	1786,	"	Robt. Burns, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Mauchline,	7th June	1786,	"	Robt. Burns, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Mauchline,	15th June	1786,	"	Robt. Burns, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Mauchline,	23rd June	1786,	"	Robt. Burns, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Mauchline,	29th June	1786,	"	Robt. Burns, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Tarbolton,	4th Augt.	1786,	"	Gilbert Burns, <i>J.W.</i>
"	"	Tarbolton,	18th Augt.	1786,	"	Robert Burns, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Sorn	5th Octr.	1786,	"	Robt. Burns, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Mauchline,	10th Novr.	1786,	"	Robt. Burns, <i>D.M.</i>
"	"	Mauchline,	14th Decr.	1786,	"	Gilbert Burns, <i>J.W.</i>

JOURNEY TO EDINBURGH.

For nearly half a century after the death of Burns, it was a common belief that on his first journey to Edinburgh he tramped all the way—a distance of nearly sixty miles. Dr. Currie's mis-statement to that effect in his first edition was never corrected, except by omitting, in his next issue, the concluding part of the sentence in which the mis-statement was made—"having performed his journey on foot." Chambers, in 1838, improved on Currie's mistake by adding that the poor bard was so foot-sore and knocked up with his journey that he could not leave his room for two days after reaching the city. Allan Cunningham told his readers that the poet "took a secret leave of his mother, and away he walked through Glenap to Edinburgh. . . . He turned his face to Arthur's Seat, and sung, with much buoyancy of heart as he went, a soothing snatch of an old ballad—

'As I cam in by Glenap, I met wi' an aged woman;
She bade me cheer up my heart, for the best o' my days was comin.'"

Honest Allan, who never took the pains to visit Ayrshire before venturing to tell the world all about Burns, did not know that Glenap lies nearly as far from Mossgiel in a south-westerly direction as Edinburgh does in a north-easterly one. At same time, it is but justice to him to allow that he had Lockhart's authority for putting that ballad-snatch into the poet's lips.

The details about the bard's progress and entry to Edin-

* On this occasion, Gilbert Burness is "passed and raised," and be it observed that this is the last instance in these Books where the important surname is signed "Burness."

burgh assumed an authentic and really interesting shape only when a reliable informant, Mr. Archibald Prentice, editor of the *Manchester Times*, on 8th March 1841, forwarded a letter on the subject to Professor Wilson of Edinburgh, who gave the communication immediate publicity. The substance of that information is as follows :—In 1786, the father of Mr. Prentice was a young farmer at Covington Mains, near Biggar, and a confirmed admirer of Burns's poetry, as is vouched by the poet's Edinburgh list of subscribers in 1787, where his name is set down for twenty copies. A mutual friend of Mr. Prentice and of Burns was Mr. George Reid, of Barquharie, near Ochiltree, who volunteered the aid of an excellent pony to convey the bard to Edinburgh on this occasion. It was arranged that the journey should be performed in two rides, and that Covington, which is just about half-way, should be the resting place, during the first night. In consequence of notice sent by Mr. Reid to Mr. Prentice of the poet's intentions, the latter prepared an entertainment at his house, to which the neighboring farmers were invited. Accordingly, on the afternoon of Monday 27th November 1787, Burns was seen approaching under the guidance of Mr. Lang, a young clergyman, then located in that quarter, who had been sent out on horseback to meet the poet at some distance off, and herald his way to Covington. Our bard had proceeded from Mossgiel by way of Sorn and Muirkirk, tracing his favorite Ayr to its source at Glenbuck. A step or two brought him into Lanarkshire, where he soon was among the windings of the infant Clyde. The services of Mr. Lang would be available there at occasional crossings of that stream; for the fords were uncertain through the effect of frequent floods in that hilly district. The parish of Covington is a beautiful amphitheatre, with Wellbrae Hill to the east, Tinto and the Culter Fells to the south, and the pretty green conical hill, Quothquan Law, to the east; the whole scene being enlivened by the youthful Clyde which winds its way through the centre, gathering volume from a hundred tributary rills. The bard has not left this picture unpainted—

"Yon wild mossy mountains sae lofty and wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the Clyde,
Where the grouse thro' the heath lead their coveys to feed,
And the swain tents his flock as he pipes on his reed."

The fact of the poet's arrival was intimated to the invited neighbors by a white sheet, attached to a hay-fork, being put on the top of the farmer's highest cornstack, and pre-

sently they were seen issuing from their homes and converging to the point of meeting. A glorious evening, or rather night which borrowed something from the morning followed, and the conversation of the poet confirmed and increased the admiration created by his writings. On the following morning he breakfasted with a large party at the next farm-house, tenanted by James Stodart; and at Carnwath he lunched with Mr. John Stodart, banker there, whose daughter afterwards became Mrs. Prentice.

The poet reached Edinburgh on the evening of Tuesday 28th November, and took an early opportunity of returning the pony to Mr. Reid by the hands of Mr. John Samson (a brother of the renowned "Tam") who happened then to be leaving Edinburgh for Ayrshire. Mr. Samson was also bearer of the following note from Burns.

(¹) TO MR. GEORGE REID, BARQUHARIE.

(CHAMBERS, 1851.)

MY DEAR SIR,—John Samson begged your pownie in such a manner, seconded by Mr. Dalrymple of Orangefield, that I hope you will forgive my not returning it by the carrier.

I left Mr. Prentice's on Monday night. There was a most agreeable little party in the evening; a Mr. Lang, a dainty body of a clergyman; Mr. and Mrs. Stodart—a glorious fellow, with a still more glorious wife, with whom I breakfasted, along with Mr. Prentice, next morning. For Mr. Prentice, no words can do him justice. Sound sterling sense, and plain warm hospitality are truly his.

R. B.

[EDINBURGH, 29th Nov. 1786.]

Mr. Prentice junior, concluded his interesting communication in these words:—"My father though a strictly moral and religious man himself, always maintained that the virtues of the poet greatly predominated over his faults. I once heard him exclaim with hot wrath, when somebody was quoting from an *apologist*, 'What! do *they* apologise for

him! One-half of his good, and all his bad divided among a score o' them, would make them a' better men!' In the year 1809, I resided for a short time in Ayrshire, in the hospitable house of my father's friend Reid, and surveyed with a strong interest such visitors as had known Burns. I soon learned how to anticipate their representations of his character. The men of strong minds and strong feelings were invariable in their expressions of admiration; but the prosy consequential *bodies* all disliked him as exceedingly dictatorial. The men whose religion was based on intellect and high moral sentiment all thought well of him; but the mere professors, with their 'twa-mile prayers and half-mile graces,' denounced him as 'worse than an infidel.'"

BURNS IN EDINBURGH.

From allusions in the poet's note to Reid of Barquharie, it is evident that he had, in Ayrshire, been introduced to Mr. Dalrymple of Orangefield. Chambers suggests that as the latter gentleman, whom he describes as "a warm-hearted, high-pulsed man, enthusiastically given to Masonry, and an occasional scribbler of verses," had been concerned in the laying of the foundation-stone of the *New Brig* of Ayr, that introduction probably came through Provost Ballantine. The reader will find in our note at page 74, *supra*, some particulars regarding the family history of Mr. Dalrymple, and his relationship to the Earl of Glencairn, the Earl of Buchan, &c. Through that opening, Burns secured an almost immediate intercourse with a distinguished coterie of notables in Edinburgh, and his prior acquaintanceship with Professor Dugald Stewart brought him into the circles of science and literature. With exception of the note to Mr. George Reid, above printed, the poet's earliest known letter written in Edinburgh is that addressed to

(4) JAMES DALRYMPLE, ESQ. OF
ORANGEFIELD.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[EDINBURGH, 30th Nov. 1786.]

DEAR SIR,—I suppose the devil is so elated with his success with you, that he is determined by a *coup*

de main to complete his purposes on you all at once, in making you a poet. I broke open the letter you sent me : hummed over the rhymes ; and, as I saw they were extempore, said to myself, they were very well ; but when I saw at the bottom a name I shall ever value with grateful respect, "I gapit wide, but naething spak." I was nearly as much struck as the friends of Job, of affliction-bearing memory, when they sat down with him seven days and seven nights, and spoke not a word.

I am naturally of a superstitious cast, and as soon as my wonder-scared imagination regained its consciousness, and resumed its functions, I cast about what this mania of yours might portend. My foreboding ideas had the wide stretch of possibility ; and several events, great in their magnitude, and important in their consequences, occurred to my fancy. The downfall of the conclave, or the crushing of the Cork rumps : a ducal coronet to Lord George Gordon and the Protestant interest ; or St. Peter's keys to * * * *

You want to know how I come on. I am just *in statu quo*, or, not to insult a gentleman with my Latin, in "auld use and wont." The noble Earl of Glencairn took me by the hand to-day, and interested himself in my concerns, with a goodness like that benevolent Being whose image he so richly bears. He is a stronger proof of the immortality of the soul, than any that philosophy ever produced. A mind like his can never die. Let the worshipful squire, H. L., the reverend Mass J. M., go into their primitive nothing. At best, they are but ill-digested lumps of chaos—only, one of them strongly tinged with bituminous particles and sulphureous effluvia. But my noble patron, eternal as the heroic swell of magnanimity, and the generous throb of benevolence, shall look on with princely eye at "the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds." R. B.

(2) TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD, BART.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDIN. 1st Dec. [1786.]

SIR,—Mr. M'Kenzie, in Mauchline, my very warm and worthy friend, has informed me how much you are pleased to interest yourself in my fate as a man, and, (what to me is incomparably dearer) my fame as a poet. I have, Sir, in one or two instances, been patronized by those of your character in life, when I was introduced to their notice by social friends to them, and honored acquaintances to me; but you are the first gentleman in the country whose benevolence and goodness of heart has interested him for me, unsolicited and unknown. I am not master enough of the etiquette of these matters to know, nor did I stay to enquire, whether formal duty bade, or cold propriety disallowed, my thanking you in this manner,* as I am convinced, from the light in which you kindly view me, that you will do me the justice to believe this letter is not the manoeuvre of the needy, sharpening author, fastening on those in upper life, who honor him with a little notice of him or his works. Indeed the situation of poets is generally such, to a proverb, as may, in some measure, palliate that prostitution of heart and talents they have at times been guilty of. I do not think prodigality is, by any means, a necessary concomitant of a poetic turn, but I believe a careless, indolent inattention to economy is almost inseparable from it; then there must be in the heart of every bard of Nature's making a certain modest sensibility, mixed with a kind of pride, which will ever keep him out of the way of those windfalls of fortune,

* Compare this expression with a similar one in the letter to the Earl of Eglington, 11th January 1787.

which frequently light on hardy impudence, and foot-licking servility. It is not easy to imagine a more helpless state than his whose poetic fancy unfits him for the world, and whose character as a scholar gives him some pretensions to the *politesse* of life—yet is as poor as I am.

For my part, I thank Heaven my star has been kinder; learning never elevated my ideas above the peasant's shed, and I have an independent fortune at the plough-tail.

I was surprised to hear that any one who pretended in the least to the manners of the gentleman should be so foolish, or worse, as to stoop to traduce the morals of such a one as I am, and so inhumanly cruel, too, as to meddle with that late most unfortunate, unhappy part of my story. With a tear of gratitude, I thank you, Sir, for the warmth with which you interposed in behalf of my conduct. I am, I acknowledge, too frequently the sport of whim, caprice, and passion; but reverence to God, and integrity to my fellow-creatures, I hope I shall ever preserve. I have no return, Sir, to make you for your goodness but one—a return which, I am persuaded, will not be unacceptable—the honest warm wishes of a grateful heart for your happiness, and every one of that lovely flock, who stand to you in a filial relation. If ever Calumny aim the poisoned shaft at them, may Friendship be by to ward the blow!

R. B.

The foregoing letter appeared in Currie's first edition under date "Dec. 1788:" in later editions it was shifted back to "Dec. 1787," and here we have no hesitation in removing it even a year farther back. Its contents shew that some over-righteous, or perhaps malicious person, having some pretensions to the position if not the manners of a gentleman, had gone out of his road to attack the poet's moral character, especially by raking up against him the unhappy story of his transactions with Jean Armour.

Dr. Mackenzie, who was the friend, and medical attendant

of the family of Sir John Whitefoord, had communicated this circumstance to Burns in a letter, followed by the information that Sir John had silenced the slanderer by a generous defence of the poet. Dr. Mackenzie afterwards practiced his profession for many years in Irvine, and having attained the highest honors of the magistracy in that burgh, retired in 1827 to Edinburgh, where he died at an advanced age in January 1837. To his son, John Whitefoord Mackenzie, Esq., W.S., we are indebted for some valuable information made use of in these volumes.

The following is Sir John's reply to Burns's letter above given. It was printed in Dr. Currie's first edition, under its proper date, but withdrawn from all subsequent issues of that work. The reader will perceive that its opening paragraphs directly refer to the bard's expressions about his "fate as a man, and fame as a poet;" and yet, so careless was Currie, and his successors in same department, in regard to judging of dates by internal evidence supplied from the text they professed to edit, that in this instance the *reply* was placed so as to precede by two years, the poet's letter to which it is an obvious *answer*!

This letter of Sir John is farther interesting as proving that one of the motives which attracted Burns to the city, was the furtherance of his favorite Excise scheme.

SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *4th December 1786.*

SIR,—I received your letter a few days ago. I do not pretend to much interest, but what I have I shall be ready to exert in procuring the attainment of any object you have in view. Your character as a man, (forgive my reversing your order) as well as a poet, entitle you, I think, to the assistance of every inhabitant of Ayrshire. I have been told you wished to be made a guager; I submit it to your consideration, whether it would not be more desirable, if a sum could be raised by subscription for a second edition of your poems, to lay it out in the stocking of a small farm. I am persuaded it would be a line of life much more agreeable to your feelings, and in the end more satisfactory. When you have considered this, let me know, and whatever you determine upon, I will endeavor to promote as far as my abilities will permit. With compliments to my friend the doctor, I am, your friend and well wisher,

JOHN WHITEFOORD.

P.S.—I shall take it as a favor, when you at any time send me a new production.

It may be explained in reference to the next letter of the poet, that “the lands of Mauchline Mains, East, West, and South Mossgiel, Haugh-Mill,” and some others in Ayrshire, which the Loudon family was at that period forced to part with, were advertised to be sold in the Exchange Coffee-house, Edinburgh, on 5th December 1786. Burns seems to have been commissioned by Mr. Gavin Hamilton to send him early intelligence of the result of the sale. The Earl of Loudon (for whom Hamilton acted as factor in Mauchline parish), had died in the most melancholy manner, the victim of pressing embarrassments, in the preceding April.

(¹) TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ., MAUCHLINE.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDINBURGH, *Dec. 7th*, 1786.

HONORED SIR.—I have paid every attention to your commands, but can only say, what perhaps you will have heard before this reach you, that Muirkirklands were bought by a John Gordon, W.S., but for whom I know not; Mauchlands, Haugh-Miln, &c., by a Frederick Fotheringham, supposed to be for Ballochmyle Laird, and Adamhill and Shaw-wood were bought for Oswald’s folks.—This is so imperfect an account, and will be so late ere it reach you, that were it not to discharge my conscience I would not trouble you with it; but after all my diligence I could make it no sooner nor better.

For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas à Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birth-day inserted among the wonderful events, in the Poor Robin’s and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the black Monday, and the battle of Bothwell Bridge.—

My Lord Glencairn and the Dean of Faculty, Mr. H. Erskine, have taken me under their wing; and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth worthy, and the eighth wise man of the world. Through my Lord's influence it is inserted in the records of the Caledonian Hunt, that they universally, one and all, subscribe for the second edition.*—My subscription bills come out to-morrow, and you shall have some of them next post.—I have met, in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, what Solomon emphatically calls "A friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—The warmth with which he interests himself in my affairs is of the same enthusiastic kind which you, Mr. Aiken, and the few patrons that took notice of my earlier poetic days, showed for the poor unlucky devil of a poet.

I always remember Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy in my poetic prayers, but *you* both in prose and verse.

May could ne'er catch you but a hap,†
Nor hunger but in Plenty's lap!

Amen. R. B.

In a periodical called *The Lounger*, published in Edinburgh by Mr. Creech, appeared on 9th December 1786, a generous article from the pen of Henry Mackenzie, in which the poetry of Burns, as exhibited in the recent Kilmarnock edition, was reviewed in so appreciative a spirit, and so judiciously illustrated by select examples, that the fame of the poet was soon wafted over the kingdom. The closing passage of that review is worth quoting here:—"Burns possesses the spirit as well as the fancy of a poet. The honest pride and independence of soul, which are sometimes the Muse's only dower, break forth on every occasion in his works. It may be that I shall wrong his feelings while I indulge my own, in calling the attention of the public to his situation and circumstances. That condition, humble as it was, in which

* It will be shown by and by that the poet was mistaken here; he merely anticipated what ultimately took place.

† "But" in the first of these lines signifies *without*; in the second line it is the common English conjunction.

he found content, and wooed the Muse, might not have been deemed uncomfortable; but grief and misfortune have reached him there; and one or two of his poems hint, what I have learned from some of his countrymen, that he has been obliged to form the resolution of leaving his native land, to seek, under a West Indian clime, that shelter and support which Scotland has denied him. But I trust that means may be found to prevent this resolution from taking effect, and that I do my country no more than justice when I suppose her ready to stretch out her hand to cherish and retain this native poet whose 'woodnotes wild' possess so much excellence. To repair the wrongs of suffering or neglected merit, to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world—these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride.”*

(³) TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ., BANKER, AYR.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDINBURGH, 13th Dec., 1786.

MY HONORED FRIEND,—I would not write you till I could have it in my power to give you some account of myself and my matters, which, by the bye, is often no easy task. I arrived here on Tuesday was se'n-night,† and have suffered ever since I came to town with a miserable head-ache and stomach complaint, but am now a good deal better. I have found a worthy warm friend in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, who introduced me to Lord Glencairn, a man whose worth and brotherly kindness to me I shall remember, when time will be no more. By his interest it is passed in the “Caledonian Hunt,” and entered in their books,

* It is worthy of note in this connexion, that on 13th December, a complimentary Epistle to Burns appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, in which he was acknowledged as—“The prince o' Poets and o' Ploughmen.”

† Mistake, for “Tuesday was fourteen days.” The 13th was Wednesday.

that they are to take each a copy of the second edition, for which they are to pay one guinea.* I have been introduced to a good many of the *Noblesse*, but my avowed patrons and patronesses are the Duchess of Gordon—the Countess of Glencairn, with my Lord, and Lady Betty†—the Dean of Faculty—Sir John Whitefoord. I have likewise warm friends among the literati; Professors Stewart, Blair, and Mr. Mackenzie—the Man of Feeling. An unknown hand left ten guineas for the Ayrshire bard in Mr. Sibbald's hands, which I got. I since have discovered my generous unknown friend to be Patrick Miller, Esq., brother to the Justice Clerk; and drank a glass of claret with him, by invitation, at his own house yesternight. I am nearly agreed with Creech to print my book, and I suppose I will begin on Monday. I will send a subscription bill or two, next post; when I intend writing my first kind patron, Mr. Aiken. I saw his son to-day, and he is very well.

Dugald Stewart, and some of my learned friends, put me in the periodical paper called *The Lounger*, a copy of which I here enclose you. I was, Sir, when I was first honored with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation.

I shall certainly, my ever honored patron, write you an account of my every step; and better health and more spirits may enable me to make it something better than this stupid matter-of-fact epistle.—I have the honor to be, good Sir, your ever most grateful humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

If any of my friends write me, my direction is, care of Mr. Creech, Bookseller.

* This was only a fallacious *on dit*, as we shall afterwards find.

† Lady Betty Cunningham, an unmarried sister of Lord Glencairn.

(4) TO MR. ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK.

(DR. WADDELL'S ED., 1869.)

EDINBURGH, 15th Dec., 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,—I delayed writing you till I was able to give you some rational account of myself, and my affairs. I am got under the patronage of the Duchess of Gordon, Countess Dowager of Glencairn, Sir John Whitefoord, the Dean of Faculty, Professors Blair, Stewart, Greenfield, and several others of the noblesse and literati. I believe I shall begin at Mr. Creech's as my publisher. I am still undetermined as to the future; and, as usual, never think of it. I have now neither house nor home that I can call my own, and live on the world at large. I am just a poor wayfaring Pilgrim on the road to Parnassus, a thoughtless wanderer and sojourner in a strange land. I received a very kind letter from Mr. A. Dalziel, for which please return my thanks; and tell him I will write him in a day or two. Mr. Parker, Charles, Dr. Corsan, and honest John, my *quondam* printer, I remember in my prayers when I pray in rhyme. To all of whom, till I have an opportunity [of saluting them in person, present my warmest remembrances.]*

(3) TO MR. ROBERT AIKEN, AYR.

(DR. WADDELL'S EDITION, 1869.)

DEAR PATRON OF MY VIRGIN MUSE,—I wrote Mr. Ballantine at large all my operations and "eventful

* The original MS. of the above letter, which is now possessed by Mr. John Reid, Kingston Place, Glasgow, is in a very fragmentary condition, and wants the closing portion, with the poet's signature.

story," since I came to town,—I have found in Mr. Creech, who is my agent forsooth, and Mr. Smellie who is to be my printer,* that honor and goodness of heart which I always expect in Mr. Aiken's friends. Mr. Dalrymple of Orangefield I shall ever remember : my Lord Glencairn I shall ever pray for. The Maker of man has great honor in the workmanship of his Lordship's heart. May he find that patronage and protection in his guardian angel that I have found in him ! His Lordship has sent a parcel of subscription bills to the Marquis of Graham, with downright orders to get them filled up with all the first Scottish names about Court.—He has likewise wrote to the Duke of Montague and is about to write to the Duke of Portland for their Graces' interest in behalf of the Scotch Bard's subscription.

You will very probably think, my honored friend, that a hint about the mischievous nature of intoxicated vanity may not be unseasonable ; but, alas ! you are wide of the mark. Various concurring circumstances have raised my fame as a Poet to a height which I am absolutely certain I have not merits to support ; and I look down on the future as I would into the bottomless pit.

You shall have one or two more bills when I have an opportunity of a Carrier. I am ever, with the sincerest gratitude, Honored Sir, Your most devoted humble servt.,

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINR., 16th Dec., 1786.

* On 14th December, Mr. Creech advertised the Poetical Works of Robert Burns as "in the press, to be published by subscription for the sole benefit of the Author."

(⁵) TO MR. ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK,

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

EDINBURGH, *Dec. 20th*, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just time for the carrier, to tell you that I received your letter; of which I shall say no more but what a lass of my acquaintance said of her bastard wean; she said she “did na ken wha was the father exactly, but she suspected it was some o’ thae bonie blackguard smugglers, for it was like them.” So I only say your obliging epistle was like you. I enclose you a parcel of subscription bills. Your affair of sixty copies is also like you: but it would not be like me to comply.*

Your friend’s notion of my life has put a crotchet in my head of sketching it in some future epistle to you.† My compliments to Charles and Mr. Parker.

R. B.

The “poet’s address to a Haggis” was printed in the Edinburgh *Caledonian Mercury*, the day on which the foregoing letter was written. Of same date Burns appears to have had communication, either personally or by letter, with a venerable friend of his father, whose name has already been introduced to the reader’s notice as one of the witnesses at the poet’s baptism. We refer to Mr. John Tennant, at that time a farmer on the Doonside property, a little way south of the old “Brig o’ Doon,” but now (1786) residing at Glenconner in Ochiltree parish. We shall hear of him again in the summer of 1787, as Burns’s adviser in the choice of one of the farms offered to him by Patrick Miller, Esq., of Dalswinton. On the present occasion the poet presented Mr. Tennant with a Book, which is now in the possession of Charles Tennant,

* The name of this generous correspondent appears in the list of Subscribers to Creech’s first edition for 40 copies. It will be remembered that he subscribed for 72 copies of the Kilmarnock volume.

† This gives us the first hint of the author’s idea of an Autobiography.

Esq., of The Glen, Peeblesshire, great-grandson of the donee. It bears the following inscription in the poet's well-defined holograph :—

“A paltry present from Robert Burns, the Scotch Bard, to his own friend and his father's friend, John Tennant, in Glenconner.—20th December, 1786.”

The book thus presented is entitled “Letters concerning the Religion essential to man, as it is distinct from what is merely an accession to it. In two parts ; translated from the French. Glasgow, printed for Robert Urie, 1761.” It is referred to by David Sillar as a favorite book with Burns when he first came to Tarbolton parish.

The following letter, addressed to Burns by his much revered friend, the parish minister of Loudon, was considered by Dr. Currie of sufficient importance to appear in the Bard's correspondence. It seems to justify the belief we have already expressed that Dr. Blacklock's letter to Dr. Lawrie had a smaller share in the formation of the poet's resolution to remove to Edinburgh than he credits it with in his Autobiography. After Burns had been some weeks in the city without calling upon Dr. Blacklock, the latter thus wrote to the Ayrshire clergyman who had directed his notice to the ploughman's poems :—“By the by, I hear that Mr. Burns is, and has been some time, in Edinburgh, which news I am sorry to have heard at second hand : they would have come much more welcome from the bard's own mouth. I have, however, written to Mr. Mackenzie, *the Man of Feeling*, to beg the favor that he would bring us together.”

THE REV. GEORGE LAWRIE TO ROBERT BURNS.

“NEWMILNS, 22nd Dec., 1786.

DEAR SIR,—I last week received a letter from Dr. Blacklock, in which he expresses a desire of seeing you. . . . I rejoice to hear, from all corners, of your rising fame, and I wish and expect it may tower still higher by the new publication. But, as a friend, I warn you to prepare to meet with your share of detraction and envy—a train that may always accompany great men. For your comfort I am in great hopes that the number of your friends and admirers will increase, and that you have some chance of Ministerial, or even Royal patronage. Now, my friend, such rapid success is very un-

common: and do you think yourself in no danger of suffering by applause, and a full purse? Remember Solomon's advice, which he spoke from experience:—'Stronger is he that conquers his own spirit,' &c.

I hope you will not imagine I speak from suspicion or evil report. I assure you that I speak from love and good report, and good opinion, and a strong desire to see you shine in the sunshine as you have done in the shade—in the practice as you do in the theory of virtue. This is my prayer in return for your elegant composition in verse. All here join in compliments and good wishes for your further prosperity."

(²) TO MR. WILLIAM CHALMERS, WRITER, AYR.

(CURRIE 1800, AND CROMEK 1808.)

EDINBURGH, *Dec. 27, 1786.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I confess I have sinned the sin for which there is hardly any forgiveness—ingratitude to friendship—in not writing you sooner; but of all men living, I had intended to have sent you an entertaining letter; and by all the plodding, stupid powers, that in nodding, conceited majesty, preside over the dull routine of business—a heavily solemn oath this!—I am, and have been, ever since I came to Edinburgh, as unfit to write a letter of humor, as to write a commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, who was banished to the Isle of Patmos, by the cruel and bloody Domitian, son to Vespasian, and brother to Titus, both emperors of Rome, and who was himself an emperor, and raised the second or third persecution, I forget which, against the Christians, and after throwing the said Apostle John, brother to the Apostle James, commonly called James the Greater, to distinguish him from another James, who was, on some account or another, known by the name of James the less—after throwing him into a cauldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved, he

banished the poor son of Zebedee to a desert island in the Archipelago, where he was gifted with the second sight, and saw as many wild beasts as I have seen since I came to Edinburgh; which, a circumstance not very uncommon in story-telling, brings me back to where I set out.

To make you some amends for what, before you reach this paragraph, you will have suffered, I enclose you two poems I have carded and spun since I past Glenbuck.* One blank in the Address to Edinburgh—"Fair B——," is heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I had the honor to be more than once. There has not been anything nearly like her in all the combinations of Beauty, Grace, and Goodness, the great Creator has formed since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence.†

I have sent you a parcel of subscription-bills, and have written to Mr. Ballantine and Mr. Aiken to call on you for some of them, if they want them. My direction is, care of Andrew Bruce, Merchant, Bridge Street.

After a brief residence in the city, the poet's plain rustic garb gave way to a suit of blue and buff, the livery of Mr. Fox, with buckskins and top-boots. He continued to wear his hair tied behind, and spread upon his forehead, but without the powder which was then nearly universal. Lockhart, in 1828 (alas! just half a century ago!) thus wrote with becoming satisfaction of the full-length picture of the Bard by Nasmyth, an engraving of which we present the reader in this

* Glenbuck (as we have before pointed out), is the last bit of Ayrshire soil Burns passed over before entering Lanarkshire on his way to Edinburgh. The second of the two fresh poems would likely be his "Address to a Haggis."

† We can never forgive Alexander Smith for having committed himself to utter and vend the following inconsiderate sentence:—"Burns has hardly left a trace of himself in the northern capital. During his residence there, his spirit was soured, and he was taught to drink whisky-punch—obligations which he repaid by addressing 'Edina, Scotia's darling Seat,' in a copy of his tamest verses." Lockhart, who could feel poetry as well as the author of "City Poems," says the Address to Edinburgh is specially "remarkable for the grand stanzas on the Castle and Holyrood with which it concludes."

Robert Burns.

(IN THE FOX LIVERY.)

THE MUSE, NAE POET EVER FAND HER,
TILL BY HIMSEL HE LEARN'D TO WANDER.



volume; "Mr. Nasmyth has prepared for the present Memoirs, a sketch of the poet at full length, as he appeared in Edinburgh in the first hey-day of his reputation; dressed in tight jockey boots, and very tight buckskin breeches, according to the fashion of the day, and (Jacobite as he was) in what was considered as the Fox livery, viz., a blue coat and buff waistcoat, with broad blue stripes. The surviving friends of Burns, who have seen this picture, are unanimous in pronouncing it to furnish a very lively representation of the bard as he first attracted public notice on the streets of Edinburgh. The scenery of the back-ground is very nearly that of Burns's native spot—the river and bridge of Doon, near Alloway Kirk."

Mrs. Alison Cockburn, authoress of the charming song, "I've seen the smiling of Fortune beguiling," who was, in 1786, a lively old lady residing in Crichton Street, Edinburgh, thus wrote to a friend, near the close of that year:—"The town is at present agog with the Ploughman Poet, who receives adulation with native dignity, and is the very figure of his profession—strong, but coarse; yet has a most enthusiastic heart of love. He has seen Duchess Gordon, and all the gay world. His favorite, for looks and manners, is Bess Burnet—no bad judge indeed!"

"Duchess Gordon and all the gay world!" * Another extract from a private letter will throw light on that expression. In Feb. 1786, Mr. Drummond, a member of the Scottish bar, thus wrote to a friend of his in India, (the letter is in the possession of Mr. Blair, Balthayock House, Perthshire):—"The good town is uncommonly crowded and splendid at present. The example of dissipation set by her Grace the Duchess of Gordon, is far from shewing vice her own image. It is really astonishing to think what effect a single person will have on public manners, when supported by high rank and great address. She is never absent from a public place, and the later the hour so much the better. It is often four o'clock in the morning before she goes to bed, and she never requires more

* Jane, Duchess of Gordon, was of Ayrshire growth, she being a daughter of Magdalene Blair, of Blair, in that county. A great day was that in Ayton, Berwickshire, on 25th October 1767, when Alexander, 4th Duke of Gordon, aged 24, was there married to the charming Jane, second daughter of Sir Wm. Maxwell of Monreith, in Wigtonshire, Bart. Now, after twenty years of wedlock, with neither beauty nor gaiety impaired, she was mother of the Marquis of Huntly and six other children, of whom more anon when Burns visits Gordon Castle, on his Highland tour.

than five hours' sleep. Dancing, cards, and company, occupy her whole time."

(¹) TO LORD MONBODDO, ST. JOHN STREET.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

I SHALL do myself the honor, sir, to dine with you to-morrow, as you obligingly request.

My conscience twitting me with having neglected to send Miss Eliza a song which she once mentioned to me as a song she wished to have—I inclose it for her, with one or two more, by way of a peace-offering.—I have the honor to be, my Lord, your very humble serv^t.,

ROBT. BURNS.

SATURDAY EVE [30th Dec].

(¹) TO MR. JAMES SIBBALD, BOOKSELLER.

(DR. WADDELL'S ED., 1867.)

LAWNMARKE^T, [Jan. 1787.]

SIR—So little am I acquainted with the modes and manners of the more public and polished walks of life, that I often feel myself much embarrassed how to express the feelings of my heart, particularly gratitude.

"————— Rude am I in speech,
And little blest in the set, polish'd phrase;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now—some nine moons wasted—they have used
Their dearest efforts in the rural field;
And therefore, little can I grace my cause
In speaking for myself."

The warmth with which you have befriended an

* From the original MS. in the collection of W. F. Watson, Esq., Edinburgh.

obscure man, and young Author in your three last Magazines—I can only say, Sir, I feel the weight of the obligation, and wish I could express my sense of it. In the meantime accept of this conscious acknowledgement from, Sir, Your obliged Servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

The foregoing admirable letter first appeared in Nicholl's illustrations of the Literary History of the 18th century, Vol. III. 8vo. 1818. Mr. Sibbald himself was distinguished in more than one walk of literary enterprise; his "Chronicle of Scottish Poetry" is a much prized work, and on account of its scarcity fetches now a considerable price.* He was in 1786 publisher of a monthly periodical, called the *Edinburgh Magazine*, and the three numbers above referred to by Burns, were those of October, November, and December, published respectively in the beginning of the month following. Thus, we may be certain that the letter in the text would be penned about 3d January 1787. Each of those numbers gave extracts from the Kilmarnock volume, with kindly and judicious observations by the editor. A copy of the October part could not fail to reach Burns in November, while he was yet in Ayrshire.

On January 4th 1787, Professor Dugald Stewart presented Burns with a copy of Dr. Aiken's "Essay on Song-Writing, with a collection of English Songs," 2nd Edit. 1774. The identical volume so presented was exhibited in Dumfries on the poet's Centenary Day, 1859.

In the Professor's narrative supplied by him to Dr. Currie, we find the following reference to this matter:—"The collection of songs by Dr. Aiken, which I first put into Burns's hands, he read with unmixed delight, notwithstanding his former efforts in that very difficult species of writing; and I have little doubt it had some effect in polishing his subsequent compositions."

* "May 1803. Died at Edinburgh, Mr. James Sibbald, Bookseller."—*Scots Mag.*

(2) TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

(CHAMBERS, 1838.)

To tell the truth among friends, I feel a miserable blank in my heart, with want of her, and I don't think I shall ever meet with so delicious an armful again. She has her faults; and so have you and I; and so has everybody:

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft;
 They've ta'en me in and a' that;
 But clear your decks, and here's "The Sex!"
 I like the jads for a' that:
 For a' that and a' that,
 And twice as muckle's a' that, &c.

I have met with a very pretty girl, a Lothian farmer's daughter, whom I have almost persuaded to accompany me to the west country, should I ever return to settle there. By the by, a Lothian farmer is about an Ayrshire Squire of the lower kind; and I had a most delicious ride from Leith to her house yesternight, in a hackney-coach, with her brother and two sisters, and brother's wife. We had dined all together at a common friend's house in Leith, and danced, drank, and sang till late enough. The night was dark, the claret had been good, and I thirsty.

ROBT. BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 7th Jan., 1787.

So early as on the 7th December 1786, in the poet's letter to Gavin Hamilton, followed by a letter to Mr. Ballantine, six days later, he announces as a fact that the members of the Caledonian Hunt, one and all, in terms of a record entered in the minute book of their meetings, had subscribed for his forthcoming Edition—nay more, that for each copy "they are to pay one guinea." It now appears, however, that the sanguine poet had mistaken Lord Glencairn's promise to make

some such motion at an early meeting of his brethren of "The Hunt," for an assurance that such motion had already been made and assented to. Here follows an

EXCERPT FROM MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE ROYAL CALEDONIAN HUNT,

Held at Edinburgh on 10th Jan. 1787.

"A motion being made by the Earl of Glencairn, and seconded by Sir John Whitefoord, in favor of Mr. Burns, Ayrshire, who had dedicated the new Edition of his poems to the Caledonian Hunt, the meeting were of opinion that, in consideration of his superior merit, as well as of the compliment paid to them, Mr. Hagart should be directed to subscribe for one hundred copies, in their name, for which he should pay to Mr. Burns twenty-five pounds, upon the publication of his book."

(3) TO MR. MACKENZIE, SURGEON, MAUCHLINE.

(CHAMBERS, 1851.)

MY DEAR SIR,—Yours gave me something like the pleasure of an old friend's face. I saw *your* friend and *my* honored patron, Sir John Whitefoord, just after I read your letter, and gave him your respectful compts. He was pleased to say many handsome things of you, which I heard with the more satisfaction, as I knew them to be just.

His son John, who calls very frequently on me, is in a fuss to-day like a coronation. This is the great day—the Assembly and Ball of the Caledonian Hunt; and John has had the good luck to pre-engage the hand of the beauty-famed, and wealth-celebrated MISS M'ADAM, our country-woman. Between friends, John is desperately in for it there, and I am afraid will be desperate indeed.*

* The reader may here be reminded of the poet's clever rhyming epistle to Mr. M'Adam of Craigengillan, in which his two daughters are thus referred to:—

"Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' mony flowery simmers,
And bless your bonie lasses baith—
I'm tauld they're lo'esome kimmers."

I am sorry to send you the last speech and dying words of the LOUNGER.

A gentleman waited on me yesterday, and gave me, by LORD EGLINTON'S order, ten guineas by way of subscription for a brace of copies of my 2nd edition.

I met with Lord Maitland* and a brother of his to-day at breakfast. They are exceedingly easy, accessible, agreeable fellows, and seemingly pretty clever.—I am ever, My D^r. Sir, Yours, ROB^t. BURNS.†

EDIN^B. 11th Jan. 1787.

(¹) TO THE EARL OF EGLINTON.‡

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, 11th January, 1787.

MY LORD,—As I have but slender pretensions to philosophy, I cannot rise to the exalted ideas of a citizen of the world; but have all those national prejudices, which I believe glow peculiarly strong in the

In "Boswelliana," consisting of extracts from the Common-place Book of James Boswell, recently printed for the Grampian Club, and edited by Dr. Chas. Rogers, we find a very curious reference to the daughters of Craigengillan. "Dr. Grant asked me if Mr. Macadam had but one daughter, I said he had, properly speaking, but one. She is good-looking, but the other—poor girl!—is very ugly. My wife said it was hard that want of good looks should cause her to be reckoned *not his daughter*. She was the more a daughter on that account, as being more likely to continue with him."

* Afterwards eighth Earl of Lauderdale; at this time a conspicuous member of the House of Commons, on the side of the opposition.

† The holograph of this letter is in the hands of John Whitefoord Mackenzie, Esq., W.S., son of the bard's correspondent, to whom the public is indebted for seeing it in its complete form.

‡ This was Archibald, XI. Earl of Eglinton, who died in 1796, and was succeeded by his cousin, Hugh Montgomerie of Coilsfield. The poet's patron and correspondent was born about the year 1733, and having been brought up a soldier, he became Colonel of the Scots Greys, and a General in the army. His lordship was twice married, and by his second wife had two daughters, of whom, the elder, Lady Mary (born 5th March 1787) married the eldest son of Earl Hugh, and became the mother of Archibald-William, who succeeded as XIII. "Earl of Eglintoune" in December 1819, the hero of the "Tournament," and the "Burns Festival."

breast of a Scotsman. There is scarcely any thing, to which I am so feelingly alive as the honor and welfare of my country ; and, as a poet, I have no higher enjoyment than singing her sons and daughters. Fate had cast my station in the veriest shades of life ; but never did a heart pant more ardently, than mine, to be distinguished ; though, till very lately, I looked in vain on every side for a ray of light. It is easy then to guess how much I was gratified with the countenance and approbation of one of my country's most illustrious sons, when Mr. Wauchope called on me yesterday on the part of your Lordship.* Your munificence, my Lord, certainly deserves my very grateful acknowledgements ; but your patronage is a bounty peculiarly suited to my feelings. I am not master enough of the etiquette of life to know, whether there be not some impropriety in troubling your Lordship with my thanks, but my heart whispered me to do it.† From the emotions of my inmost soul I do it. Selfish ingratitude I hope I am incapable of ; and mercenary servility, I trust, I shall ever have as much honest pride as to detest.

R. B.

(4) TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq., BANKER, AYR.

(Partly by CROMEK in 1808, and completed in DOUGLAS, 1877.)

MY HONORED FRIEND,—It gives me a secret comfort to observe in myself that I am not yet so far gone as Willie Gaw's skate — “past redemption” ‡ — for I

* This is explained in the poet's letter of same date addressed to Dr. Mackenzie. The gentleman who brought the Earl's present was John Wauchope, Esq., W.S., a splendid portrait of whom by Raeburn, attracted much attention in the Edinburgh Raeburn Exhibition.

† The similarity of expression between this and the words used in his letter to Sir John Whitefoord at page 222 *supra* has been referred to.

‡ This is one of many such old saws, picked up by the poet from the lips of his own mother, who possessed a rich store of traditionary humor and wisdom.

—CROMEK.

have still this favorable symptom of Grace, that when my conscience, as in the case of this letter, tells me that I am leaving something undone that I ought to do, it teases me eternally till I do it.

I am still "dark as was chaos" in respect to futurity. My generous friend, Mr. Peter Miller, brother to the Justice Clerk, has been talking with me about a lease of some farm or other in an estate called Dalswinton, which he has lately bought, near Dumfries. Some life-rented embittering recollections whisper me that I will be happier any where than in my old neighborhood, but Mr. Miller is no judge of land; and though I dare say he means to favor me, yet he may give me, in his opinion, an advantageous bargain that may ruin me. I am to take a tour by Dumfries as I return, and have promised to meet Mr. Miller on his lands some time in May.

I went to a Mason-lodge yesternight,* where the most Worshipful Grand Master, Charteris, and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited. The meeting was numerous and elegant; all the different Lodges about town were present, in all their pomp.

The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity and honor to himself as a gentleman and Mason, among other general toasts, gave "Caledonia, and Caledonia's Bard, Brother B——," which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honors and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunderstruck, and, trembling in every nerve made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, some of the Grand officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, "Very well, indeed!" which set me something to rights again.

* On the authority of a little masonic brochure, called "A Winter with Robert Burns," we may state that this was St. Andrew's Lodge, which met on Friday 12th January, not 13th as might be assumed from the date of the poet's letter.

I have just now had a visit from my Landlady, who is a staid, sober, piously-disposed, sculdudry-abhorringly widow, coming on her climacterick,* she is at present in great tribulation respecting some "Daughters of Belial" who are on the floor immediately above. My Landlady, who, as I have said, is a flesh-disciplining, godly matron, firmly believes her husband is in heaven; and having been very happy with him on earth, she vigorously and perseveringly practices some of the most distinguished Christian virtues, such as attending church, railing against vice, &c., that she may be qualified to meet her quondam Bed-fellow in that happy place where the unclean and the ungodly shall never enter. This no doubt requires some strong exertions of self-denial in a hale well-kept widow of forty-five; and as our floors are low and ill-plastered, we can easily distinguish our laughter-loving, night-rejoicing neighbors when they are eating, when they are drinking, when they are singing, when they are &c., &c. My worthy Landlady tosses sleepless and unquiet—"looking for rest and finding none"—the whole night. Just now she told me—though by the by, she is sometimes dubious that I am, in her own phrase, "but a rough an' roun' Christian"—that "we should not be uneasy and envious because the wicked enjoy the good things of this life;" for these base jades who, in her own words, "lie up gandy-going with their filthy fellows, drinking the best of wines, and singing abominable songs, they shall one day lie in hell, weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth over a cup of God's wrath!"

I have to-day corrected my 152d page. My best good wishes to Mr. Aiken. I am ever, D^r. Sir, Your much indebted, humble Serv^t. ROBT. BURNS.

EDIN^R. 14th Jan., 1787.

* If Chambers was correctly informed by John Richmond, this worthy lady was "Mrs Carfrae in Baxter's Close, Lawnmarket, first scale stair on the left

It may interest some readers to know that the 152d page of the author's Edinburgh edition completes (pat to the subject of his landlady's oration given above) the "Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous." What a rich illustration of that characteristic effusion, is the portion of the foregoing letter which we recommend for careful study. After the death of the gentleman to whom the letter is addressed, it fell into the possession of Professor Leslie, at the sale of whose library and manuscripts it was purchased by the late Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. It is not known what Mr. Sharpe did with the poet's holograph; but a careful copy of the letter, in his own hand, was presented by him to Mr. George Thomson, and that copy became the property of the present Lord Dalhousie, along with the invaluable set of manuscripts which comprise the bard's portion of the "Thomson Correspondence," purchased by his Lordship in 1852.

(²) TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, 15th January 1787.

MADAM.—Yours of the 9th current, which I am this moment honored with, is a deep reproach to me for ungrateful neglect. I will tell you the real truth, for I am miserably awkward at a fib. I wished to have written to Dr. Moore, before I wrote to you; but though every day since I received yours of December 30th, the idea, the wish to write to him has constantly pressed on my thoughts, yet I could not for my soul set about it. I know his fame and character, and I am one of "the sons of little men." To write him a mere matter-of-fact affair, like a merchant's order, would be disgracing the little character I have; and to write the author of "The View of Society and Manners" a letter of sentiment—I declare every artery

hand in going down, first door in the stair." The latter portion of the above letter was written on a Sunday.

runs cold at the thought. I shall try, however, to write to him to-morrow or next day. His kind interposition in my behalf I have already experienced,* as a gentleman waited on me the other day, on the part of Lord Eglinton, with ten guineas, by way of subscription for two copies of my next edition.

The word you object to in the mention I have made of my glorious countryman, and your immortal ancestor, is indeed borrowed from Thomson; but it does not strike me as an improper epithet.† I distrusted my own judgment on your finding fault with it, and applied for the opinion of some of the literati here, who honor me with their critical strictures, and they all allow it to be proper. The song you ask I cannot recollect, and I have not a copy of it. I have not composed anything on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print, and the enclosed, which I will print in this edition. You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my "Vision" long ago, I had attempted a description of Kyle, of which the additional stanzas are a part, as it originally stood.‡ My heart glows with a wish to do justice to the merits of the "Saviour of his Country," which sooner or later I shall at least attempt.

You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet: alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities

* It thus appears that the Earl of Eglinton's kind attention to Burns arose through the interposition of Dr. Moore, who had found an opportunity to point out to his lordship the great merits of the ploughman poet.

† "——— the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' great, unhappy Wallace' heart."

The phrase thus objected to was, in 1793, altered to

That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart."

‡ Stanzas in *The Vision*, beginning

"By stately tower or palace fair," and ending with the first Duan.

deserve some notice ; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity, and crude unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice which has borne me to a height, where I am absolutely, feelingly certain, my abilities are inadequate to support me ; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave me, and recede perhaps as far below the mark of truth. I do not say this in the ridiculous affectation of self-abasement and modesty. I have studied myself, and know what ground I occupy ; and, however a friend or the world may differ from me in that particular, I stand for my own opinion, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I mention this to you, once for all, to disburthen my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say more about it.—But,

“ When proud fortune’s ebbing tide recedes,”

you will bear me witness, that when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood unintoxicated with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward with rueful resolve to the hastening time, when the blow of Calumny should dash it to the ground, with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph.

* * * * *

Your patronizing me and interesting yourself in my fame and character as a poet, I rejoice in ; it exalts

me in my own idea ; and whether you can or cannot aid me in my subscription is a trifle. Has a paltry subscription-bill any charms to the heart of a bard, compared with the patronage of the descendant of the immortal Wallace?

R. B.

(¹) TO DR. JOHN MOORE, LONDON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, *17th January 1787.*

SIR,—Mrs. Dunlop has been so kind as to send me extracts of letters she has had from you, where you do the rustic bard the honor of noticing him and his works. Those who have felt the anxieties and solitudes of authorship can only know what pleasure it gives to be noticed in such a manner, by judges of the first character. Your criticisms, Sir, I receive with reverence ; only I am sorry they mostly came too late ; a peccant passage or two that I would certainly have altered were gone to the press.

The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greatest part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compeers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities ; and as few if any writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. Still I know very well the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have

lately had : and in a language where Pope and Churchill have raised the laugh, and Shenstone and Gray drawn the tear ; where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape, and Lyttelton and Collins described the heart, I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame.

R. B.

Dr. Currie has printed in full the reply of Dr. Moore (dated 23rd January) to the above letter, and we shall content ourselves with presenting a quotation merely :—" If I may judge of the author's disposition from his works, with all the other good qualities of a poet, he has not the *irritable* temper ascribed to that race of men by one of their number, whom you have the happiness to resemble in ease and *curious felicity* of expression. Indeed the poetical beauties, however original and brilliant, and lavishly scattered, are not all I admire in your works ; the love of your native country, that feeling sensibility to all the objects of humanity, and the independent spirit which breathes through the whole, give me a most favorable impression of the poet, and have made me often regret that I did not see the poems, the certain effect of which would have been my seeing the author last summer, when I was longer in Scotland than I have been for many years. . . .

" Before I received your letter, I sent enclosed in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, a sonnet by Miss Williams, a young poetical lady, which she wrote on reading your *Mountain Daisy* ; perhaps it may not displease you."

SONNET BY HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

While soon 'the garden's flaunting flowers' decay,
And scatter'd on the earth neglected lie,
The 'Mountain Daisy,' cherish'd by the ray
A poet drew from heav'n, shall never die.

Ah, like that simple flower the poet rose,
'Mid penury's bare soil and bitter gale ;
He felt each storm that on the mountain blows,
And never knew the shelter of the vale.

By genius in her native vigor nurst,
On Nature with impassion'd look he gazed ;
Then through the cloud of adverse Fortune, burst
Indignant, and in light unborrow'd blazed.

SCOTIA! from rude affliction shield thy Bard,
His Heav'n-taught numbers Fame herself will guard.

January 25th, 1787.—On this, the Poet's Birth-day, the Earl of Glencairn presented to him a silver snuff-box. The lid shows a five-shilling coin of the reign of Charles I., dated 1644. On an inner and covered bottom of the box, Burns has, with his own hand, recorded the fact and date of the presentation.

In the Poet's Monument at Edinburgh, there is exhibited the original letter sent to him by the Earl of Buchan, dated 1st February 1787. It contains such advices as that nobleman might suppose his rank entitled him to offer to a person in the circumstances and position of the Ploughman-Poet of Ayrshire. The document bears marks of having been carried for some time in the bard's pocket, and, in particular, the back of it shows that he made use of it for recording, in a rough pencil scrawl, eight lines of the song "Bonie Dundee." That seems to have been noted from the singing of his Crochallan companion, Mr. Robert Cleghorn, farmer at Saughton Mills, near Edinburgh.

In the British Museum is preserved a holograph scroll or copy of Burns's reply to the Earl, which seems to have been used by Dr. Currie to print from, in his volume of the Bard's correspondence, although his divergences from the original are manifold. It is thus doctored by that biographer, or by Mr. John Syme, who assisted in arranging the materials for him:—"Swift says, 'Praise is like ambergrise; a little is odorous—much stinks.'"

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[3d Feb. 1787.]

MY LORD,—The honor your Lordship has done me, by your notice and advice in yours of the 1st instant, I shall ever gratefully remember:—

"Praise from thy lips 'tis mine with joy to boast,
They best can give it who deserve it most."

Your Lordship touches the darling chord of my heart, when you advise me to fire my muse at Scottish story and Scottish scenes. I wish for nothing

more than to make a leisurely pilgrimage through my native country ; to sit and muse on those once hard-contended fields, where Caledonia, rejoicing, saw her bloody Lion borne through broken ranks to victory and fame ; and, catching the inspiration, to pour the deathless names in song. But, my Lord, in the midst of these delighting enthusiastic reveries, a long-visaged, dry, moral-looking phantom strides across my imagination, and with the frigid air of a declaiming Preacher, sets off with a text of Scripture, thus—

“I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence. Friend, I do not come to open the ill-closed wounds of your follies and misfortunes, merely to give you pain : I wish through these wounds to imprint a lasting lesson on your heart. I will not mention how many of my salutary advices you have despised : I have given you line upon line and precept upon precept ; but while I have been chalking you out the right way to wealth and godly character, you, with audacious effrontery, have zigzagged across the path, contemning me to my face : you know the consequences. It is not yet three months since home was so hot for your stay that you were on the wing for the western side of the Atlantic, not to make a fortune, but to hide your disgrace.

“Now that your dear-loved Scotia about whom you make such a racket, puts it in your power to return to the situation of your forefathers, will you follow these will-o'-wisp meteors of fancy and whim, till they bring you once more to the brink of ruin ? I grant that the utmost ground you can occupy is but half a step from Want ; but still it is half a step from it. If all that I can say is ineffectual, let her who seldom calls to you in vain, let the call of Pride prevail with you. You know how you feel at the iron grip of ruthless oppression : you know how you bear the galling sneer of contumelious greatness. I tender you the

Bony Dundee

" O where gat ye that happer-meal bannocks ?"
O filly blind Bony, I dinna ye see;
I gat it frae a Lodger laddie
Between Saint Johnston & bony Dundee:
O gin I saw the laddie that gae me it!
Aft has he doud'd me on his knee:
May Heav'n protect my bony Scotch laddie,
And fend him safe back to his babie & me.!

My blessings on thy sweet, wee lips!
My blessings on thy bony e'e-brie!
Thou smiles fae like my Lodger laddie,
Thou's dearest, dearest aye to me!
But I'll big a bow's on yon bony banks
Where Tay rins wimplan by fae clear;
An' I'll clead thee in the tartan fine,
An' make thee a man like thy dadie dear!

L^d Elphinstone,
you will see by the above that I have
added a Stanza to bony Dundee. — If you think it will
do, you may set it a going
"Upon a ten-string Instrument
And on the Gallery"

R. B.

conveniences, the comforts of life, independence and character, on the one hand ; I hold you out servility, dependence, and wretchedness, on the other. I will not insult your common sense by bidding you make a choice."

This, my Lord, is an unanswerable harangue. I must return to my humble station, and woo my rustic Muse in my wonted way at the plough-tail. Still, my Lord, while the drops of life warm my heart, gratitude to that dear-loved country in which I boast my birth, and gratitude to those her distinguished sons, who have honored me so much with their patronage and approbation, shall, while stealing through my humble shades, ever distend my bosom, and at times draw forth, as now, the swelling tear. R. B.

(¹) TO ROBERT CLEGHORN, SAUGHTON
MILLS,*

ENCLOSING AN OLD SONG WITH ADDITIONS.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM NOTES, 1839.)

DEAR CLEGHORN,—You will see by the above that I have added a stanza to "Bonie Dundee." If you think it will do, you may set it agoing,

' Upon a ten string'd instrument,
And on the psaltery.'

R. B.

To Mr. Cleghorn, farmer. God bless the trade!

* The original letter is now in the possession of Mr. James Raymond Claghorn, of Philadelphia. We give a fac-simile of it.

(1) TO THE REV. GEORGE LAWRIE,

NEWMILNS, NEAR KILMARNOCK.

(CURRIE, 1802.)

EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 5, 1787.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—When I look at the date of your kind letter, my heart reproaches me severely with ingratitude in neglecting so long to answer it. I will not trouble you with any account, by way of apology, of my hurried life and distracted attention; do me the justice to believe that my delay by no means proceeded from want of respect. I feel, and ever shall feel for you the mingled sentiments of esteem for a friend, and reverence for a father.

I thank you, Sir, with all my soul for your friendly hints, though I do not need them so much as my friends are apt to imagine. You are dazzled with newspaper accounts and distant reports; but, in reality, I have no great temptation to be intoxicated with the cup of prosperity. Novelty may attract the attention of mankind awhile; to it I owe my present *éclat*; but I see the time not far distant when the popular tide which has borne me to a height of which I am, perhaps, unworthy, shall recede with silent celerity, and leave me a barren waste of sand, to descend at my leisure to my former station. I do not say this in the affectation of modesty; I see the consequence is unavoidable, and am prepared for it. I had been at a good deal of pains to form a just, impartial estimate of my intellectual powers before I came here; I have not added, since I came to Edinburgh, anything to the account; and I trust I shall take every atom of it back to my shades, the coverts of my unnoticed early years.

In Dr. Blacklock, whom I see very often, I have

found what I would have expected in our friend—a clear head and an excellent heart.

By far the most agreeable hours I spend in Edinburgh must be placed to the account of Miss Lawrie and her pianoforte. I cannot help repeating to you and Mrs. Lawrie a compliment that Mr. Mackenzie, the celebrated *Man of Feeling*, paid to Miss Lawrie the other night at the concert. I had come in at the interlude, and sat down by him till I saw Miss Lawrie in a seat not very far distant, and went up to pay my respects to her. On my return to Mr. Mackenzie, he asked me who she was : I told him 'twas the daughter of a reverend friend of mine in the West country. He returned, there was something very striking, to his idea, in her appearance. On my desiring to know what it was, he was pleased to say : “She has a great deal of the elegance of a well-bred lady about her, with all the sweet simplicity of a country girl.”

My compliments to all the happy inmates of St. Margaret's, I am, my dear Sir,—Yours most gratefully,
ROBERT BURNS.

MINUTE OF THE CANONGATE KILWINNING LODGE OF FREEMASONS, EDINBURGH.

“1st February 1787.—There being no meeting in January, the Lodge met this evening. The following gentlemen were entered apprentices:—Mr. Burns, Mr. Spied, Captain Bartlet, Mr. Haig, G. Douglas, Esq., E. B. Clive, Esq., Mr. Maule, Mr. Wotherspoon, Mr. Moir, Mr. Lindsay Carnegie, Mr. Archibald Millar, and Mr. James Buchan. There were also initiated—Colonel Dalrymple of Inveresk, Captain Hammond of Marchfield, Cramond, and J. Hammond, Esq.

The R. W. Master having observed that Brother Burns was at present in the Lodge, who is well known as a great poetic writer, and for a late publication of his works, which have been universally commended, submitted that he should be assumed a member of this Lodge, which was unanimously agreed to, and he was assumed accordingly. Having spent

the evening in a very social manner, as the meetings of the Lodge always have been, it was adjourned till next monthly meeting.

JO. MILLAR, J.W.

ALEX. FERGUSON, M.
CHAS. MORE, D.M."

Much has been said and written, and even painted, on the subject of Burns's formal inauguration, as Poet Laureate of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge; but after careful research among its records, we find that the above is the only notice of his presence at any meeting of the Lodge.

Cunningham, in his Biography of Burns, states that a few days after reaching Edinburgh "he found his way to the lonely grave of Fergusson, and, kneeling down, kissed the sod." But in the following document, dated after two months' residence in the city, his language leads to the inference that he had not yet ascertained the exact spot:—"I am sorry *to be told* that the remains lie in your church-yard unnoticed and unknown."

(¹) TO THE HONORABLE THE BAILIES OF CANONGATE, EDINBURGH.

GENTLEMEN,—I am sorry to be told that the remains of Robert Fergusson, the so justly celebrated poet, a man whose talents for ages to come will do honor to our Caledonian name, lie in your church-yard among the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown.

Some memorial to direct the steps of the lovers of Scottish song, when they wish to shed a tear over the "narrow house" of the bard who is no more, is surely a tribute due to Fergusson's memory—a tribute I wish to have the honor of paying.

I petition you then, Gentlemen, to permit me to lay a simple stone over his revered ashes, to remain an unalienable property to his deathless fame. I have the honor to be, Gentlemen, your very humble Servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

6th Feb. 1787.

This petition, by mistake addressed to the Canongate Magistrates, eventually reached the proper parties, namely, the Managers of the Kirk and the Kirkyard Funds of Canongate, who, at a meeting held in their Session-house on the 22d day of February 1787, had the matter brought formally before them by their Treasurer, who produced the poet's petition. That document having been read and considered, was ordered to be engrossed in their Sederunt-book, followed by a *Grant* in these terms:—

"The said managers, in consideration of the laudable and disinterested motion of Mr. Burns, and the propriety of his request, did, and hereby do, unanimously grant power and liberty to the said Robert Burns to erect a headstone at the grave of the said Robert Fergusson, and to keep up and preserve the same to his memory in all time coming."

"Extracted forth of the records of the managers, by
WILLIAM SPROTT *Clerk.*"

(¹) TO MR. PETER STUART,

EDITOR OF THE 'STAR' NEWSPAPER, LONDON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,—You may think, and too justly, that I am a selfish, ungrateful fellow, having received so many repeated instances of kindness from you, and yet never putting pen to paper to say, thank you; but if you knew what a devil of a life my conscience has led me on that account, your good heart would think yourself too much avenged. By the by, there is nothing in the whole frame of man, which seems to me so unaccountable as that thing called Conscience. Had the troublesome yelping cur powers efficient to prevent a mischief, he might be of use; but at the beginning of the business, his feeble efforts are to the workings of passion as the infant frosts of an autumnal morning to the unclouded fervor of the rising sun: and no sooner are the tumultuous doings

of the wicked deed over, than, amidst the bitter native consequences of folly, in the very vortex of our horrors, up starts Conscience and harrows us with the feelings of the damned.

I have enclosed you, by way of expiation, some verse and prose, that, if they merit a place in your truly entertaining miscellany, you are welcome to. The prose extract is literally as Mr. Sprott sent it me.

The inscription on the Stone will be as follows:—

“HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET.

Born, September 5 1751.—Died, 16 October 1774.

No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay,

‘No storied urn nor animated bust,’

This simple stone directs pale SCOTIA'S way

To pour her sorrows o'er her POET'S dust.”

On the other side of the Stone will be inscribed:—

“By special grant of the Managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial-place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson.” R. B.

(*) TO DR. MOORE, LONDON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, 15th Feb. 1787.

REVERED SIR,—Pardon my seeming neglect in delaying so long to acknowledge the honor you have done me in your kind notice of me, January 23d. Not many months ago I knew no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast anything higher than a distant acquaintance with a country clergyman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me; I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment; but genius, polished by learning, and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this

of late I frequently meet with, and tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit I do not deny; but I see with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

For the honor Miss Williams has done me, please, Sir, return her in my name my most grateful thanks. I have more than once thought of paying her in kind, but have hitherto quitted the idea in hopeless despondency. I had never before heard of her; but the other day I got her poems, which for several reasons, some belonging to the head, and others the offspring of the heart, give me a great deal of pleasure. I have little pretensions to critic lore; there are I think two characteristic features in her poetry—the unfettered wild flight of native genius, and the querulous, *sombre* tenderness of ‘time settled sorrow.’

I only know what pleases me, often without being able to tell why.

R. B.

Burns was indeed, as Lockhart has remarked, “far too busy with society and observation to find time for poetical composition during his first residence in Edinburgh. The magnificent scenery of the capital and its surroundings filled him with extraordinary delight. In the spring mornings he walked very often to the top of Arthur’s Seat, and, lying prostrate on the turf, surveyed the rising of the sun out of the sea in silent admiration; his chosen companion on such occasions being that ardent lover of Nature, and learned artist, Mr. Alexander Nasmyth. The Braid Hills, and the Pentlands, to the south of Edinburgh, were also among his favorite morning walks; and it was in some of these that Mr. Dugald Stewart tells us ‘he charmed him still more by his private conversation than he had ever done in company.’ ‘He was,’ adds the professor, ‘passionately fond of the beauties of Nature, and I recollect once he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to

his mind which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained.' "

(⁵) TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ., AYR.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

MY HONORED FRIEND,—I will soon be with you now "in guid black prent;" in a week or two at farthest. I am obliged, against my own wish, to print subscriber's names; so if any of my Ayr friends have subscription-bills, they must be sent in to Creech directly. I am getting my phiz done by an eminent engraver; and if it can be ready in time, I will appear in my book looking, like all other *fools*, to my title-page. I have the honor to be, ever your grateful

ROBT. BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 24th Feb. 1787.

(¹) TO THE HON. HENRY ERSKINE.

ENCLOSING FRAGMENT—"WHEN GUILDFORD GOOD."

(CHAMBERS, 1851.)

SIR,—I shewed the enclosed political ballad to my Lord Glencairn, to have his opinion whether I should publish it; as I suspect my political tenets, such as they are, may be rather heretical in the opinion of some of my best friends. I have a few first principles in Religion and Politics, which, I believe I would not easily part with; but for all the etiquette of, by whom, in what manner, &c. I would not have a dissocial word about it with any one of God's creature's, particularly an honored patron or respected friend. His lordship seems to think the piece may appear in

print, but desired me to send you a copy for your suffrage, I am, with the sincerest gratitude for the notice with which you have been pleased to honor the rustic bard, Sir, your most devoted, humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

Two o'clock.

(¹) TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

MY LORD,—I wanted to purchase a profile of your Lordship, which I was told was to be got in town; but I am truly sorry to see that a blundering painter has spoiled a 'human face divine.' The enclosed stanzas I intended to have written below a picture or profile of your Lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with any thing of a likeness.

As I will soon return to my shades, I wanted to have something like a material object for my gratitude. I wanted to have it in my power to say to a friend, there is my noble patron, my generous benefactor. Allow me, my Lord, to publish these verses. I conjure your Lordship by the honest throe of gratitude, by the generous wish of benevolence, by all the powers and feelings which compose the magnanimous mind, do not deny me this petition.* I owe much to your Lordship; and, what has not in some other instances always been the case with me, the weight of the obligation is a pleasing load. I trust I have a heart as independent as your Lordship's, than which I can say nothing more; and I would not be be-

* Currie notes as follows:—"It does not appear that the Earl granted this request, nor have the verses alluded to been found among the manuscripts." They have subsequently been found, and are now in the Poet's monument at Edinburgh. See p. 74, *supra*.

holden to favors that would crucify my feelings. Your dignified character in life, and manner of supporting that character, are flattering to my pride ; and I would be jealous of the purity of my grateful attachment, where I was under the patronage of one of the much favored sons of fortune.

Almost every poet has celebrated his patrons, particularly when they were names dear to fame, and illustrious in their country ; allow me then, my Lord, if you think the verses have intrinsic merit, to tell the world how much I have the honor to be your Lordship's highly indebted and ever grateful, humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 1787.

(³) TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

(BLACKIE'S ED., 1846.)

EDINBURGH, *March* 8, 1787.

DEAR SIR,—Yours came safe, and I am, as usual, much indebted to your goodness. Poor Captain Montgomery is cast. Yesterday it was tried whether her husband could proceed against the unfortunate lover without first divorcing his wife ; and their Gravities on the Bench were unanimously of opinion that Maxwell may prosecute for damages directly, and need not divorce his wife at all if he pleases ; and Maxwell is immediately, before the Lord Ordinary, to prove, what I dare say will not be denied, the crim-con. Then their Lordships will modify the damages, which I suppose will be pretty heavy, as their Wisdoms have expressed great abhorrence of my gallant right worshipful brother's conduct.*

* For some interesting particulars in regard to this case, see note to *Sappho Rediviva*, Vol. III., p. 43.

O all ye powers of love unfortunate, and friendless woe ! pour the balm of sympathising pity on the grief-torn, tender heart of the hapless fair one !

My two songs on Miss W. Alexander and Miss Peggy Kennedy were likewise tried yesterday by a jury of literati, and found defamatory libels against the fastidious powers of Poesy and Taste ; and the author forbidden to print them under pain of forfeiture of character. I cannot help almost shedding a tear to the memory of two songs that had cost me some pains, and that I valued a good deal, but I must submit.*

My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, and Miss Kennedy.

My poor unfortunate songs come again across my memory, d—n the pedant, frigid soul of criticism for ever and ever,—I am ever, dear Sir, your obliged,

ROBERT BURNS.

(¹) TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH,†

STUDENT IN PHYSIC, COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDINBURGH, *March 21, 1787.*

MY EVER DEAR OLD ACQUAINTANCE,—I was equally surprised and pleased at your letter ; though I dare say you will think by my delaying so long to write to you,

* The songs were respectively "The Lass of Ballochmyle," and "Young Peggy blooms, our boniest Lass." See Vol. I., pp. 139 and 322. Peggy was a young relative of Mrs. Hamilton, and the Miss Kennedy, mentioned near the close of the letter, was an unmarried sister of Mrs. Hamilton, who resided in Mr. Hamilton's house.

† Burns seems to have become first acquainted with this correspondent, when they were mere lads, attending the parish school of Dalrymple ; after which they were again companions at the Ayr grammar school for a brief period. Most of the poet's editors since Cromek's days have printed with capitals, and inverted commas, the *lady thorn* referred to at the close of this letter ; yet not one has ventured to suggest the locality of that "Lady Thorn," which the two school-fellows once sported about. We suspect that *lady thorn* here is merely another

that I am so drowned in the intoxication of good fortune as to be indifferent to old, and once dear connections. The truth is, I was determined to write a good letter, full of argument, amplification, erudition, and, as Bayes says, *all that*. I thought of it, and thought of it, but for my soul, I cannot; and lest you should mistake the cause of my silence, I just sit down to tell you so. Don't give yourself credit though, that the strength of your logic scares me: the truth is, I never mean to meet you on that ground at all. You have shown me one thing which was to be demonstrated; that strong pride of reasoning, with a little affectation of singularity, may mislead the best of hearts. I, likewise, since you and I were first acquainted, in the pride of despising old women's stories, ventured in "the daring path Spinoza trod," but experience of the weakness, not the strength of human powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed religion.

I must stop, but don't impute my brevity to a wrong cause. I am still, in the Apostle Paul's phrase, "the old man with his deeds" as when we were sporting about the lady-thorn. I shall be four weeks here yet, at least; and so I shall expect to hear from you—welcome sense, welcome nonsense.—I am, with warmest sincerity, my dear old friend, yours &c.

ROBT. BURNS.

(C) TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, 22nd March, 1787.

MADAM,—I read your letter with watery eyes. A

name for haw-thorn in blossom, or "May-flower." Mr. Candlish married Jean, a sister of the poet's friend, James Smith of Mauchline, and distinguished himself as a lecturer on medicine, in Edinburgh, and died somewhat suddenly in 1806. He was father of the late Principal Candlish of the New College, Edinburgh.

little, very little while ago, *I had scarce a friend but the stubborn pride of my own bosom*; now I am distinguished, patronized, befriended by you. Your friendly advices, I will not give them the cold name of criticisms, I receive with reverence. I have made some small alterations in what I before had printed. I have the advice of some very judicious friends among the literati here, but with them I sometimes find it necessary to claim the privilege of thinking for myself. The noble Earl of Glencairn, to whom I owe more than to any man, does me the honor of giving me his strictures: his hints, with respect to impropriety or indelicacy, I follow implicitly.

You kindly interest yourself in my future views and prospects; there I can give you no light. It is all

“Dark as was Chaos ere the infant sun
Was roll’d together, or had tried his beams
Athwart the gloom profound.”

The appellation of a Scottish bard is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it is my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes and Scottish story are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business—for which heaven knows I am unfit enough—to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers; and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honored abodes of her heroes.

But these are all Utopian thoughts: I have dallied long enough with life; 'tis time to be in earnest. I have a fond, an aged mother to care for: and some other bosom-ties perhaps equally tender. Where the individual only suffers by the consequences of his own thoughtlessness, indolence, or folly, he may be excusable; nay, shining abilities, and some of the nobler

virtues, may half sanctify a heedless character ; but where God and nature have entrusted the welfare of others to his care ; where the trust is sacred, and the ties are dear, that man must be far gone in selfishness, or strangely lost to reflection, whom these connexions will not rouse to exertion.

I guess that I shall clear between two and three hundred pounds by my authorship ; with that sum I intend, so far as I may be said to have any intention, to return to my old acquaintance, the plough, and, if I can meet with a lease by which I can live, to commence farmer. I do not intend to give up poetry ; being bred to labor, secures me independence, and the Muses are my chief, sometimes have been my only enjoyment. If my practice second my resolution, I shall have principally at heart the serious business of life ; but while following my plough, or building up my shocks, I shall cast a leisure glance to that dear, that only feature of my character, which gave me the notice of my country, and the patronage of a Wallace.

Thus, honored Madam, I have given you the bard, his situation, and his views, native as they are in his own bosom.

ROBT. BURNS.

THE EDINBURGH JOURNAL.

In Currie's Edition of Burns's works there appeared a fragment of a Diary or journal, consisting of the Poet's observations on men and manners, commenced by him in Edinburgh, in April, 1787. "By this time," says Mr. Douglas, "Burns had finished the work of revising the sheets of his new edition, and had to wait only a few weeks to see it in shape for delivery to the public. His time was not wholly spent in mere social enjoyments ; he did not fail to mix by times with the men eminent in letters and philosophy, who then shed lustre on the name of Scotland. Lockhart has remarked that 'Burns's poetry might have procured him access to these circles ; but it was the extraordinary resources he displayed in conversation, the strong sagacity of his observations on life

and manners, the splendor of his wit, and the glowing energy of his eloquence, that made him the serious object of admiration among these practiced masters of the arts of talk. Even the stateliest of these philosophers had enough to do to maintain the attitude of equality when brought into contact with Burns's gigantic understanding; and every one of them whose impressions on the subject have been recorded agrees in pronouncing his conversation to have been the most remarkable thing about him.' 'We are thus,' says Chambers, 'left to understand that the best of Burns has not been, and was not of a nature to be, transmitted to posterity.'

"It was of the document which we are now, in the order of chronology, to lay before the reader that the elder D'Israeli in his nice speculations 'On the Literary Character' thus wrote:—'Once we were nearly receiving from the hand of genius the most curious sketches of the temper, the irascible humors, the delicacy of the soul, even to its shadowiness, from the warm *sbozzos* of Burns, when he began a diary of his heart—a narrative of characters and events, and a chronology of his emotions. It was natural for such a creature of sensation and passion to project such a regular task, but quite impossible to get through it.'

"Lockhart, on this point thus wrote in 1828:—'That most curious document, it is to be observed, has not yet been printed entire; another generation will, no doubt, see the whole of the confession.' Fifty years, however, have elapsed (says Mr. Douglas, writing in 1878), since that writer penned his remark, and the world has seen no more of the diary than Dr. Currie was pleased to publish: where the MS. has gone to, we are at a loss to know. That biographer says in reference to the suppressed portions:—'The most curious particulars in the book are the delineations of characters he met with. These are not numerous; but they are chiefly of persons of distinction in the republic of letters, and nothing but the delicacy, and respect due to living characters prevents us from committing them to the press. Though it appears that in his conversation he was sometimes disposed to sarcastic remarks on men with whom he lived, nothing of this kind is discoverable in these more deliberate efforts of his understanding, which, while they exhibit great clearness of discrimination, manifest also the wish, as well as the power, to bestow high and generous praise.'"

The history of the discovery of the complete Diary is not without interest. Mr. Paterson, Publisher of Douglas's Edi-

tion, had, during its progress through the press, advertised for the missing MS. and inserted enquiries after it in *London Notes and Queries*. His efforts were fruitless. At length, in February, 1879, shortly after the appearance of his fourth volume, he received a letter from Mr. Macmillan, Publisher, London, telling him that he had the MS. in his possession, and had so had it for 20 years, but had not realized its importance and full bearing till on reading the remarks of Mr. Douglas, and others, quoted above. Mr. Douglas tells us that Mr. Macmillan had really placed the holograph in the hands of the late Alexander Smith, Author of the *Life Drama*, who edited for him the Edition known as the "Golden Treasury;" but that this gentleman so thoroughly failed to appreciate its importance, that he described it as a tattered volume of early scraps understood to have been presented by the poet to Mrs. Dunlop, which, "after being in the hands of many persons, and at each remove denuded of certain pages, came, through Mr. Stillie, Edinburgh, into the possession of Mr. Macmillan."

Mr. Macmillan also intimated to Mr. Paterson his purpose of giving the unpublished portions of the MS. to the public in the pages of Macmillan's Magazine for March, 1879. It was not, however, till August following that Mr. Douglas was enabled to lay before his readers the full contents of the Poet's Edinburgh Journal. This he was under the necessity of doing in an Appendix. We are happy to be able to be the first to present the precious record in its proper place and relations. We think scarcely anything is better calculated to elevate Burns in the estimation of intelligent persons, than the fact that he, a youthful Ploughman, fresh from the plow, should be able to look with undazzled eyes on all that was eminent in Edinburgh in these, its palmyest, days, to maintain himself as the peer of the noblest and the most learned, and be, further, able thus coolly to set down his estimate of their characters, endowments and peculiarities.—J. H.

EDINBR., *April ninth*, 1787.

As I have seen a good deal of human life in Edinburgh, a great many characters which are new to one bred up in the shades of life as I have been, I am determined to take down my remarks on the spot. Gray observes, in a letter of his to Mr. Palgrave, that

“half a word fixed upon or near the spot, is worth a cart-load of recollection.” I don’t know how it is with the world in general, but with me, making remarks is by no means a solitary pleasure. I want some one to laugh with me; some one to be grave with me; some one to please me and help my discrimination with his or her own remark; and at times, no doubt, to admire my acuteness and penetration. The World are so busied with selfish pursuits, ambition, vanity, interest or pleasure, that very few think it worth their while to make any observation on what passes around them; except where that observation is a sucker or branch of the darling plant they are rearing in their fancy. Nor am I sure, notwithstanding all the sentimental flights of novel writers and the sage philosophy of moralists, if we are capable of so intimate and cordial a coalition of friendship as that one of us may pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect man demands from man; or, from the unavoidable imperfections attending human nature, of one day repenting his confidence.

For these reasons, I am determined to make these pages my *Confidant*. I will sketch every character that anyway strikes me, to the best of my observation, with unshrinking justice; I will insert anecdotes and take down remarks, in the old law phrase, without feud or favor: where I hit on anything clever, my own applause will in some measure feast my vanity; and (begging Patroclus’ and Achates’s pardon) I think a lock and key a security at least equal to the bosom of any friend whatever.

My own private story likewise, my amours, my rambles, the smiles and frowns of Fortune on my bardship, my poems and fragments that must never see the light, shall be occasionally inserted,—in short,

never did four shillings purchase so much friendship, since Confidence went first to market, or Honesty was set to sale.

To these seemingly invidious, but too just ideas of human friendship I shall cheerfully and truly make one exception—the connection between two persons of different sex, when their interests are united or absorbed by the sacred tie of Love—

“When thought meets thought ere from the lips it part,
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart.”

There confidence—confidence that exalts them the more in one another’s opinion—confidence that endears them the more to one another’s heart, unreservedly and luxuriantly “reigns and revels.” But this is not my lot; and in my situation, if I am wise (which, by the by, I have no great chance of being) my fate should be with the Psalmist’s sparrow “to watch alone on the house tops.” Oh, the pity!!!

A FRAGMENT—Tune “Daintie Davie.”

There was a birkie born in Kyle,
But what na day o’ what na style,
I doubt it’s hardly worth the while
To be sae nice wi’ Davie.*

&c., &c.

(See page 125, Vol. I.)

THERE are few of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin than the comparison how a man of genius—nay, avowed worth, is everywhere received with the reception which a mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of Fortune, meets. Imagine a man of

* The true date of this composition we hold to be May 1786. He substitutes the name “Davie” for *Robin*, when he inserts it here, as a modest kind of coverture; but his footnote to verse second sufficiently indicates that “Robin” is the name he intends to be sung.

abilities, his breast glowing with honest pride, conscious that men are born equal, still giving that "honor to whom honor is due;" he meets at a great man's table a Squire Something or a Sir Somebody; he knows the noble landlord at heart gives the bard, or whatever he is, a share of his good wishes beyond any at table perhaps; yet how will it mortify him to see a fellow whose abilities would scarcely have made an eight-penny tailor, and whose heart is not worth three farthings, meet with attention and notice that are forgot to the son of Genius and Poverty?

The noble Glencairn has wounded me to the soul here, because I dearly esteem, respect, and love him. He showed so much attention—engrossing attention one day to the only blockhead, as there was not but his lordship, the dunderpate and myself, that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance; but he shook my hand and looked so benevolently good at parting—God bless him! though I should never see him more, I shall love him until my dying day! I am pleased to think I am so capable of the throes of gratitude, as I am miserably deficient in some other virtues.

With Dr. Blair I am more at ease. I never respect him with humble veneration; but when he kindly interests himself in my welfare, or, still more, when he descends from his pinnacle, and meets me on equal ground, my heart overflows with what is called *liking*. When he neglects me for the mere carcass of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself with scarcely any emotion—What do I care for him or his pomp either?

It is not easy forming an exact-judging judgment of any one: but, in my opinion, Dr. Blair is merely an astonishing proof of what industry and application can do. Natural parts like his are frequently to be

met with—his vanity is proverbially known among his acquaintances—but he is justly at the head of what may be called fine writing; and a critic of the first—the very first rank in prose; even in poesy, a good bard of Nature's making can only take the *pas* of him. He has a heart, not of the finest water, but far from being an ordinary one. In short, he is a truly worthy and most respectable character.*

Mr. GREENFIELD is of a superior order. The bleedings of humanity, the generous resolve, a manly disregard of the paltry subjects of vanity, virgin modesty, the truest taste, and a very sound judgment, characterise him. His being the first speaker I ever heard is perhaps half owing to industry. He certainly possesses no small share of poetic abilities; he is a steady, most disinterested friend, without the least affectation of seeming so; and as a companion, his good sense, his joyous hilarity, his sweetness of manners and modesty, are most engagingly charming.

THE most perfect character I ever saw is Mr. Stewart. An exalted judge of the human heart, and of composition. One of the very first public speakers; and equally capable of generosity as humanity. His principal discriminating feature is—from a mixture of benevolence, strength of mind and manly dignity, he not only at heart values, but in his deportment and address bears himself to all the actors, high and low, in the drama of life, simply as they merit in playing their parts.† Wealth, honors, all that is extraneous

*Dr. Blair died 27th December 1800, shortly after Dr. Currie had published the first paragraph of the bard's character of him. Subsequent editions contained the second paragraph, when the remarks could no longer give offence to the living subject of them.

†This same high compliment, applied to the same gentleman, and also to Bishop Geddes, occurs more than once in these letters.

of the man, have no more influence with him than they will have at the Last Day. His wit, in the hour of social hilarity, proceeds almost to good-natured waggishness; and in telling a story he particularly excels.

THE next character I shall mention—my worthy bookseller, Mr. Creech—is a strange, multiform character. His ruling passions of the left hand kind are—extreme vanity, and something of the more harmless modifications of selfishness. The one, mixed as it often is with great goodness of heart, makes him rush into all public matters, and take every instance of unprotected merit by the hand, provided it is in his power to hand it into public notice; the other quality makes him, amid all the embarrass in which his vanity entangles him, now and then to cast half a squint at his own interest. His parts as a man, his deportment as a gentleman, and his abilities as a scholar, are much above mediocrity. Of all the Edinburgh literati and wits he writes the most like a gentleman. He does not awe you with the profoundness of the philosopher, or strike your eye with the soarings of genius; but he pleases you with the handsome turn of his expression, and the polite ease of his paragraph. His social demeanor and powers, particularly at his own table, are the most engaging I have ever met with. On the whole he is, as I said before, a multiform, but an exceedingly respectable, worthy character.

Of the five preceding sketches of character, those of Dr. Greenfield, Professor Stewart, and Bailie Creech, were made known to the public for the first time on the publication of the entire MS. The comparatively favorable picture given of the last named gentleman forms a pleasing contrast to the versified sketch of him composed at Ellisland as a portion of "The Poet's Progress." But our variable author's opinion

of Creech latterly veered round in his favor again. In January 1789 he wrote of him to Dr. Moore in severe terms; but to the same gentleman he thus expressed himself in two months thereafter:—"I must own that at last Creech has been amicable and fair with me."

The foregoing eulogium on Dugald Stewart corresponds with all that Burns has elsewhere uttered in reference to him. His earliest expressed opinion of him occurs in a letter to Dr. Mackenzie of Mauchline, thus:—"I think his character, divided into ten parts, stand thus—four parts Socrates; four parts Nathaniel; and two parts Shakspeare's Brutus."

Dr. Greenfield had an eventful and melancholy history. He was an effective and popular preacher, and a favorite with Burns both in his office and as a man. He rose to a professorial chair, to becoming colleague with Dr. Blair in the High Church, Edinburgh, and, in 1797, to the dignity of the Moderatorship of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Suddenly his fame and very name were eclipsed.

For some flagrant, but mysterious crime, he was, in 1798, shorn of all his honors and deposed from the ministry, while he himself disappeared from public view, having retired, it is said, to some obscure locality in the north of England, where he lived under an assumed name.*

All the preceding entries in the poet's Journal seem to have been made prior to his leaving Edinburgh on his Border tour on 5th May 1787. What immediately follows may have been suggested to him about the end of June of the same year, in a visit he is supposed to have made to Greenock, in course of his brief tour in the West Highlands.

The following poem is the work of some hapless unknown son of the Muses who deserved a better fate. There is a great deal of "The Voice of Cona" in his solitary, mournful notes; and had the sentiments been clothed in Shenstone's language they would have been no discredit even to that elegant poet.

* It may be interesting here to note that the Rev. Wm. Greenfield's name is in the subscribers' list for two copies of the author's edition of 1787; and in 1796 he subscribed one guinea for behoof of the deceased poet's widow and family. Professor Stewart in 1787, subscribed for four copies of the poems, and in 1796 for three guineas to the charitable fund. Dr. Hugh Blair in 1787, subscribed for one copy of the poems, and gave nothing for the bard's widow and family in 1796. Creech subscribed for 500 copies of the poems in 1787, and in 1796 gave five guineas to the relief fund referred to.

ELEGY.

Strait is the spot and green the sod
 From whence my sorrows flow;
 And soundly rests the ever dear
 Inhabitant below, etc.

See page 96, Vol. II.

“The Edinburgh Journal” was continued at Ellisland, and for the sake of connection we give the continuation here, which anticipates some of the pieces mentioned in it. These will appear at their proper chronological places.

ELLISLAND, 14th June 1788—*Sunday**.

This is now the third day I have been in this country. Lord, what is man! what a bustling little bundle of passions, appetites, ideas, and fancies! and what a capricious kind of existence he has here! If legendary stories be true, there is indeed an *elsewhere* where as Thomson says “Virtue sole survives.”

“Tell us ye Dead,
 Will none of you in pity disclose the secret
 What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?
 a little time
 Will make us learn'd as you are, and as close.”

I am such a coward in life, so tired of the service, that I would almost at any time, with Milton's Adam,

. . . gladly lay me in my mother's lap,
 And be at peace;”

but a wife and children—in poetics, “the fair partner of my soul, and the little dear pledges of our mutual love”—these bind me to struggle with the stream, till some chopping squall overset the silly vessel, or, in the listless return of years, its own craziness drive it

* Error in date, Sunday was the 15th.

a wreck. Farewell now to those gilded follies, those garnished vices which, though half sanctified by the bewitching levity of Wit and Humor, are at best but thriftless idling with the precious current of existence—nay, often poisoning the whole that, like the plains of Jericho, ‘the water is naught, and the ground barren;’ and nothing short of a supernaturally gifted Elisha can ever after heal the evils.

“Wedlock, the circumstance that buckles me hardest to Care—if virtue and religion were to be anything with me but mere names—was what in a few seasons I must have resolved on; in the present case it was unavoidably necessary. Humanity, generosity, honest vanity of character, justice to my own happiness for after life, so far as it could depend (which it surely will a great deal) on internal peace,—all these joined their warmest suffrages, their most powerful solicitations, with a rooted attachment to urge the step I have taken. I can fancy, *how*, but have never seen *where*, I could have made it better. Come then, let me return to my favorite motto, that glorious passage in Young—

‘ on Reason build Resolve,
That column of true majesty in man.’ ”

June 16th, 1788. Copy of a letter to Lord Buchan in answer to a bombast epistle he sent me when I went first to Edinburgh.

(See page 249, Vol. II.)

To the Earl of Eglinton on receiving Ten Guineas as his Lordship’s subscription money.

(See page 240, Vol. II.)

WRITTEN IN CARSE HERMITAGE.

(See page 7, Vol. III.)

ALTERATION OF THE LINES WROTE IN CARSE
HERMITAGE.

December 23d, 1788. (See page 29, Vol. III.)

[The reader can realize these alterations by comparing the later version, p. 29, Vol. III., with the earlier version, p. 7, same volume.

The pane of glass on which Burns inscribed his verses was purchased at a sale of the effects of a married daughter of Dr. Smith, R.N., who acquired the mansion-house and grounds of Friar's Carse from the Riddell family in 1794. Dr. Smith's death must have occurred a year or two before Cromek's visit to the locality in 1807. That editor was "shocked to find the Hermitage almost gone to decay, the inscribed pane of glass removed, the floor covered with straw, the door thrown open, and the trees broken and trampled down by cattle." The pane subsequently came into the possession of the late Archibald Fullarton, Esq., Publisher, Edinburgh, whose heirs presumably still possess it.]

*VERSICLES ON SIGN-POSTS.

(See page 38, Vol. III.)

TO ROBT. GRAHAM, OF FINTRY, ESQ.

With a request for an Excise Division.—Ellisland, Sep. 8, 1788."

(See page 15, Vol. III.)

O bitter mockery of the pompous bier,
While down the wretched VITAL-PART is driven!
The cave-lodged beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heaven.
(See page 41, Vol. III.)

CASTLE GORDON.

Intended to be sung to the tune 'Morag.'
Streams that glide in orient plains, &c.
(See page 118, Vol. II.)

SCOTS BALLAD.

Tune—"Mary weep no more for me."
My heart is wae and unco wae
To think upon the raging sea, &c.
(See page, 122, Vol. II.)

* The pieces to which these extracts apply will be found at the places indicated.

SONG.

Tune—'Captain O'Kean.'

The small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning, &c.

(See page 168, Vol. II.)

EXTEMPORE—TO MR. GAVIN HAMILTON.

To you, sir, this summons I've sent,

Pray whip till the pownie is fraething,

But if you demand what I want,

I honestly answer you—naething.

(See page 16, Vol. II.)

TO THE NIGHTINGALE—ON LEAVING E. C., 1784.

BY MRS. DR. HUNTER, LONDON.

Why from these shades, sweet bird of eve,

Art thou to other regions wildly fled? &c.

A SONNET IN THE MANNER OF PETRARCH.

BY THE SAME.

Come tender thoughts with twilight's pensive gloom

Soften remembrance, mitigate despair.

ON SEEING A FELLOW WOUND A HARE—SPRING.

Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art,

And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye; &c.

(See page 64, Vol. III.)

TO MR. GRAHAM OF FINTRY,

On being appointed to my Excise Division.

I call no goddess to inspire my strains, etc.

(See page 93, Vol. III.)

SONG.

Tune—'Ewe bughts, Marion.'

Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,

And leave old Scotia's shore? etc.

(See page 288, Vol. I.)

ELEGY ON CAPT. MATTHEW HENDERSON,

A Gentleman who held the patent for his honors immediately from Almighty God

O Death, thou tyrant fell and bloody ! etc.

(See page 155, Vol. III.)

EPITAPH ON ROBERT FERGUSSON.

No pageant bearings here, nor pompous lay,

No storied urn nor animated bust, etc.

(See page 68, Vol. II.)

TO THE HONORABLE THE BAILIES OF THE CANON-GATE, EDINBURGH.

GENTLEMEN,—I am sorry to be told that the remains," etc.

See page 254, Vol. II.

We return now to Burns's correspondence. Another of the great eras of Burns's existence had arrived. The Edinburgh edition of his poems had just appeared, and been everywhere received with unbounded admiration and applause. All the whirl and excitement of this period did not cause the poet to lose his head or cause him to forget his earlier friends. His dedication of his new edition to the *Caledonian Hunt* is dated April 7, 1787; on the 15th, ere yet the volume had appeared, we find him writing the following letter to Mrs. Dunlop, who was one of his earliest patrons of rank.

(4) TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, 15th April, 1787.

MADAM,—There is an affectation of gratitude which I dislike. The periods of Johnson and the pauses of Sterne may hide a selfish heart. For my part, Madam, I trust I have too much pride for servility, and too

little prudence for selfishness. I have this moment broken open your letter, but

..... "Rude am I in speech,
And therefore little can I grace the cause,
In speaking of myself;"

so I shall not trouble you with any fine speeches and hunted figures. I shall just lay my hand on my heart, and say, I hope I shall ever have the truest, the warmest sense of your goodness.

I come abroad in print, for certain, on Wednesday. Your orders I shall punctually attend to; only, by the way, I must tell you that I was paid before for Dr. Moore's and Miss Williams' copies, through the medium of Commissioner Cochrane in this place, but that we can settle when I have the honor of waiting on you.

Dr. Smith* was just gone to London the morning before I received your letter to him. R. B.

17th April 1787.—MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWIXT MR. CREECH AND MR. BURNS, RESPECTING THE PROPERTY OF MR. BURNS'S POEMS.†

By advice of friends, Mr. Burns having resolved to dispose of the property of his Poems, and having consulted with Mr. Henry M'Kenzie upon the subject, Mr. Creech met with Mr. Burns at Mr. M'Kenzie's house upon Tuesday, the 17th April 1787, in the evening, and they three having retired and conversed upon the subject, Mr. Burns and Mr. Creech referred the sum, to be named by Mr. M'Kenzie, as being well acquainted with matters of this kind, when Mr. M'Kenzie said he thought Mr. Burns should have a hundred guineas for the property of his poems.

* Author of "The Wealth of Nations."

† A copy of this document was published in the "Burns Calendar," Kilmarnock 1874; we are indebted to Mr. Creech's representatives for a perusal of the original, from which we have corrected a few inaccuracies in that printed copy.

Mr. Creech said that he agreed to the proposal, but as Scotland was now amply supplied with the very numerous edition now printed, he could write to Mr. Caddell of London, to know if he would take a share of the Book, but at any rate Mr. Burns should have the money named by Mr. M'Kenzie, which Mr. Burns most cordially agreed to, and to make over the property upon these terms, whenever Mr. Creech required him.

Upon Monday the 23d of April 1787, Mr. Creech informed Mr. Burns that he had remained in Town expecting Mr. Caddell's answer, for three days, as to his taking a share of the property of the poems; but that he had received no answer; yet he would, as formerly proposed and agreed to, take the whole upon himself, that Mr. Burns might be at no uncertainty in the matter.

Upon this, both parties considered the transaction as finished.

EDINBURGH, *Oct. 23d, 1787.*

"On demand I promise to pay to Mr. Robert Burns, or Order, One Hundred Guineas, value received.

WILLIAM CREECH."

"Received the contents—*May 30, 1788.*"

"ROBERT BURNS."

(⁶) TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ., AYR.

(GILBERT BURNS'S ED., 1820.)

SIR,—I have taken the liberty to send a hundred copies of my book to your care. . . . I trouble you then, Sir, to find a proper person (of the mercantile folks I suppose will be best) that, for a moderate consideration, will retail the books to subscribers, as they are called for. Several of the subscription bills have been mislaid, so all who say they have subscribed must be served at subscription price; otherwise, those who have not subscribed must pay six shillings. Should more copies be needed, an order by post will be immediately answered.

My respectful compliments to Mr. Aiken. I wrote him by David Shaw, which I hope he received.

I have the honor to be, with the most grateful sincerity, Sir, your obliged and very humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 18th April, 1787.

(²) TO MR. GEORGE REID, BARQUHARIE,*

WITH A PARCEL,

CARE OF W^M. RONALD, TOBACCONIST, MAUCHLINE.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

MY DEAR SIR,—The fewer words I can tell my story in, so much the better, as I am in an unco tirryfyke of a hurry.

I have sent two copies of my book to you ; one of them as a present to yourself, or rather, to your wife, the other present in my name to Miss Jenny. It goes to my heart that time does not allow me to make some very fine turned periods on the occasion, as I generally like pretty well to hear myself speak ; at least, fully as well as anybody else.

Tell Miss Jenny that I had wrote her a long letter, wherein I had taken to pieces r^t. Honorables, Honorables, and Reverends not a few ; but it, with many more of my written things were stolen from my room, which terrified me from “scauding my lips in ither folk’s kail” again. By good luck, the fellow is gone to Gibraltar, and I trust in heaven he will go to the bottom for his pains. I will write you by post when I leave Auld Reekie, which will be in about ten days.

ROB^T. BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 19th April 1787.

* The name of this gentleman has already been made familiar to the reader at p. 219 *supra*.

John Rodger, Esq., Clydesdale Bank, Greenock is the possessor of the poet's holograph of this letter, and to him the public is indebted for its appearance here. The seal attached to it is an elongated oval shewing at full length a figure, not very well cut, of Orpheus, or perhaps Sappho, with harp in hand. The poet's lodging would, at this date, be the same as that spoken of in the letter to Ballantine of 14th January previous. It appears to be certain that Cromek had seen this letter, although he did not choose to print it. Allan Cunningham quotes from that editor's unpublished memoranda, a very absurd story, evidently suggested by the letter in the text, that the Bard's Edinburgh private Journal "a clasped volume with lock and key" was stolen from his room by a Leith carpenter who was in the habit of calling on Burns, and which carpenter enlisted immediately thereafter in a company of Artificers then being raised to go to Gibraltar. That story is contradicted by the fact that Dr. Currie, in 1800, not only published several extracts from the Journal, but admitted its existence, regretting only that "delicacy and respect due to living characters prevented him from committing the remainder to print."

For the Author's edition, thus ready for delivery on 18th April, there were no fewer than fifteen hundred subscribers, many of whom paid more than the selling price of the volume. The general public demand having speedily exhausted the first impression, the publisher was under the necessity of reprinting the book; and this second impression also failing to supply the extending market, a third reprint bearing date 1787 was produced in London, by arrangement with Mr. Creech. Burns now found himself in possession of a considerable sum of ready money, and the first impulse of his mind was to visit some of the classic scenes of Scottish history and romance. "He had as yet," writes Lockhart, "seen but a small part of his own country, and this by no means among the most interesting of her districts, until indeed his own poetry made it equal, on that score, to any other."

(³) TO DR. JOHN MOORE, LONDON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, 23d April 1787.

I RECEIVED the books, and sent the one you mentioned to Mrs. Dunlop. I am ill-skilled in beating

the coverts of imagination for metaphors of gratitude. I thank you, Sir, for the honor you have done me; and to my latest hour will warmly remember it. To be highly pleased with your book is what I have in common with the world; but to regard these volumes as a mark of the author's friendly esteem, is a still more supreme gratification.

I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight, and, after a few pilgrimages over some of the classic ground of *Caledonia Cowdenknowes, Banks, of Yarrow, Tweed, &c.*, I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood never more to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles. To the rich, the great, the fashionable, the polite, I have no equivalent to offer; and I am afraid my meteor appearance will by no means entitle me to a settled correspondence with any of you, who are the permanent lights of genius and literature.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. If once this tangent flight of mine were over, and I were returned to my wonted leisurely motion in my old circle, I may probably endeavor to return her poetic compliment in kind. ROBT. BURNS.

The answer to this letter, though long, is of such value, in a literary point of view, that we print it here entire. It is especially interesting as showing the necessity for such an edition of the poet's works as this we now offer, which satisfies the writer's desideratum of seeing the number of Burns's admirers extended to all persons of taste who understand English.

LETTER FROM DR. MOORE TO ROBERT BURNS.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

CLIFFORD STREET, May 23, 1787.

DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure of your letter by Mr. Creech, and soon after he sent me the new edition of your poems.

You seem to think it incumbent on you to send to each subscriber, a number of copies proportionate to his subscription money, but you may depend upon it, few subscribers expect more than one copy, whatever they subscribed; I must inform you, however, that I took twelve copies for those subscribers, for whose money you were so accurate as to send me a receipt, and Lord Eglinton told me he had sent for six copies for himself, as he wished to give five of them in presents.

Some of the poems you have added in this last edition are very beautiful, particularly the "Winter Night," the "Address to Edinburgh," "Green grow the rashers," and the two songs immediately following; the latter of which is exquisite. By the way, I imagine, you have a peculiar talent for such compositions, which you ought to indulge. No kind of poetry demands more delicacy or higher polishing. Horace is more admired on account of his Odes than all his other writings. But nothing now added is equal to your "Vision," and "Cotter's Saturday Night." In these are united fine imagery, natural and pathetic description, with sublimity of language and thought. It is evident that you already possess a great variety of expression and command of the English language, you ought therefore to deal more sparingly, for the future, in the provincial dialect—why should you by using that, limit the number of your admirers to those who understand the Scottish, when you can extend it to all persons of taste who understand the English language? In my opinion you should plan some larger work than any you have as yet attempted. I mean, reflect upon some proper subject and arrange the plan in your mind, without beginning to execute any part of it till you have studied most of the best English poets, and read a little more of history. The Greek and Roman stories you can read in some abridgement, and soon become master of the most brilliant facts, which must highly delight a poetical mind. You should also, and very soon may, become master of the heathen mythology, to which there are everlasting allusions in all the poets, and which in itself is charmingly fanciful. What will require to be studied with more attention, is modern history; that is the history of France and Great Britain, from the beginning of Henry the seventh's reign. I know very well you have a mind capable of attaining knowledge by a shorter process than is commonly used, and I am certain you are capable of making better use of it when attained than is generally done.

I beg you will not give yourself the trouble of writing to me when it is inconvenient, and make no apology when you do write for having postponed it—be assured of this, however, that I shall always be happy to hear from you. I think my friend Mr. ——— told me that you had some poems in manuscript by you, of a satirical and humorous nature (in which by the way I think you very strong) which your prudent friends prevailed on you to omit; particularly one called *Somebody's Confession*,* if you will entrust me with a sight of any of these, I will pawn my word to give you copies, and will be obliged to you for a perusal of them.

I understand that you intend to take a farm, and make the useful and respectable business of husbandry your chief occupation; this, I hope, will not prevent your making occasional addresses to the nine ladies who have shewn you such favor, one of whom visited you in the "auld clay biggin." Virgil, before you, proved to the world that there is nothing in the business of husbandry inimical to poetry; and I sincerely hope that you may afford an example of a good poet being a successful farmer. I fear it will not be in my power to visit Scotland this season; when I do, I shall endeavor to find you out, for I heartily wish to see and converse with you. If ever your occasions call you to this place, I make no doubt of your paying me a visit, and you may depend on a very cordial welcome from the family,—I am, dear Sir, your friend and obedient servant. J. MOORE.

On the same day that the letter to Dr. Moore was penned, Burns was presented by Dr. James Gregory with an English Translation of Cicero's Select Orations (London, 1756). The Dr. was Professor of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, to which Chair he succeeded in 1773, on the death of his father, Dr. John Gregory, author of "A Father's Legacy to his Daughters." The poet made the following inscription on the book:

EDIN., 23d April, 1787.

THIS book, a present from the truly worthy and learned DR. GREGORY, I shall preserve to my latest hour, as a mark of the gratitude, esteem, and veneration I bear the Donor. So help me God!

ROBERT BURNS.

* Holy Willie's Prayer, Vol. 1, p. 91.

(5) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

* * * * *

Your criticisms, Madam, I understand very well, and could have wished to have pleased you better. You are right in your guess that I am not very amenable to counsel. Poets, much my superiors, have so flattered those who possessed the adventitious qualities of wealth and power, that I am determined to flatter no created being either in prose or verse.

I set as little by kings, lords, clergy, critics, &c., as all these respective gentry do by my bardship. I know what I may expect from the world by and by—illiberal abuse, and perhaps contemptuous neglect.

I am happy, Madam, that some of my own favorite pieces are distinguished by your particular approbation. For my "Dream," which has unfortunately incurred your loyal displeasure, I hope, in four weeks or less, to have the honor of appearing at Dunlop in its defence, in person.

ROBT. BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 30th April, 1787.

(1) TO MR. WILLIAM DUNBAR, W.S.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1835.)

DEAR SIR,—In Justice to Spenser, I must acknowledge that there is scarcely a poet in the language could have been a more agreeable present to me; and in justice to you, allow me to say, Sir, that I have not met with a man in Edinburgh to whom I would so willingly have been indebted for the gift. The tattered rhymes I herewith present you, and the handsome volumes of Spenser for which I am so much indebted to your goodness, may perhaps be not in

proportion to one another ; but be that as it may, my gift, though far less valuable, is as sincere a mark of esteem as yours.

The time is approaching when I shall return to my shades ; and I am afraid my numerous Edinburgh friendships are of so tender a construction, that they will not bear carriage with me. Yours is one of the few that I could wish of a more robust constitution. It is indeed very probable that when I leave this city, we part never more to meet in this sublunary sphere ; but I have a strong fancy that in some future eccentric planet, the comet of happier systems than any with which astronomy is yet acquainted, you and I, among the harum-scarum sons of imagination and whim, with a hearty shake of a hand, a metaphor, and a laugh, shall recognise old acquaintances :

“Where Wit may sparkle all its rays,
Uncurst with Caution's fears ;
And Pleasure, basking in the blaze,
Rejoice for endless years.”

I have the honor to be, with the warmest sincerity,
Dear Sir, yours ever,

ROBT. BURNS.

LAWNMARKET, *Monday Morning.*

[*April 30th, 1787.*]

On Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd May, Burns was absent from Edinburgh on a private visit to the little circle of friends who had entertained him so heartily at Covington near Biggar, on his journey to Edinburgh in November previous. This fact was communicated to Mr. Robert Chambers by a descendant of the farmer at Covington Mains, Mr. Archibald Prentice, already noticed. It appears that the careful husbandman had made an entry of that visit in his private journal, among his agricultural notes.

Who may venture to guess what errand the bard went upon ? It is enough that in an off-hand, but very natural song, he

has described that locality most minutely, and recorded a sufficient motive for revisiting it.

“ Not Gowrie’s rich valley, nor Forth’s sunny shores,
To me hae the charms o’ yon wild mossy moors;
For there, by a lonely sequestered stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream:
She is not the fairest, altho’ she is fair,
O’ nice education but sma’ is her share,
Her parentage humble as humble can be,
But I loe the dear lassie because she loes me.”

See p. 54, supra.

(¹) TO THE REV. DR. HUGH BLAIR.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

LAWNMARKEṬ, *Edinburgh*, 3d May, 1787.

REV. AND MUCH RESPECTED SIR,—I leave Edinburgh to-morrow morning, but could not go without troubling you with half a line, sincerely to thank you for the kindness, patronage, and friendship, you have shewn me. I often felt the embarrassment of my singular situation; drawn forth from the veriest shades of life to the glare of remark; and honored by the notice of those illustrious names of my country, whose works, while they are applauded to the end of time, will ever instruct and mend the heart. However, the meteor-like novelty of my appearance in the world might attract notice, and honor me with the acquaintance of the permanent lights of genius and literature, those who are truly benefactors of the immortal nature of man; I knew very well, that my utmost merit was far unequal to the task of preserving that character, when once the novelty was over: I have made up my mind that abuse, or almost even neglect, will not surprize me in my quarters.

I have sent you a proof impression of Beugo’s work for me, done on India paper, as a trifling but sincere testimony with what heart-warm gratitude I am, &c.

On Friday 4th May, the poet sent to his venerated friend, Mr. William Tytler of Woodhouselee, a similar proof impres-

sion of his engraved portrait, accompanied by the well-known poetical address to that gentleman, beginning—

“Reveréd defender of beauteous Stuart.”

See page 89, supra.

At the close of the poem he added as follows:—

My Muse jilted me here, and turned a corner on me,
and I have not got again into her good graces.

Do me the justice to believe me sincere in my grateful remembrance of the many civilities you have honored me with since I came to Edinburgh, and in assuring you that I have the honor to be, revered Sir, your obliged and very humble servant

ROBERT BURNS.

LAWNMARKET, *Friday, noon.*

(¹) TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON, MUSIC ENGRAVER,
EDINBURGH.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1835.)

DEAR SIR,—I have sent you a song never before known, for your collection; the air by Mr. M'Gibbon, but I know not the author of the words, which I got from Dr. Blacklock.

Farewell, my dear Sir! I wished to have seen you, but I have been dreadfully throng, as I march to-morrow.

Had my acquaintance with you been a little older, I would have asked the favor of your correspondence; as I have met with few people whose company and conversation gave me so much pleasure, because I have met with few whose sentiments are so congenial to my own.

When Dunbar and you meet, tell him I left Edinburgh with the idea of him hanging somewhere about my heart.

Keep the original of this song till we meet again, whenever that may be.

R. B.

LAWNMARKET, *4th May, 1787.*

(2) TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

(DR. WADDELL'S EDITION, 1869.)

MY LORD,—I go away to-morrow morning early, and allow me to vent the fulness of my heart in thanking your Lordship for all that patronage, that benevolence and that friendship with which you have honored me. With brimful eyes, I pray that you may find, in that great Being whose image you so nobly bear, that Friend which I have found in you. My gratitude is not selfish design—that I disdain; it is not dodging after the heel of greatness—that is an offering you disdain. It is a feeling of the same kind with my devotion.

R. B.

LAWNMARKET, *Friday, noon.*

THE BORDER TOUR.

Our poet, in the course of his first winter in Edinburgh, had formed an intimate acquaintance with Robert Ainslie, the son of a substantial farmer at Berrywell, near Dunse, in Berwickshire. This young man, then only in his twenty-first year, had been serving his apprenticeship with a Writer to the Signet, in Edinburgh, and his name appears on the list of subscribers for two copies of the author's new edition. Burns having now resolved to enjoy an excursion of considerable scope through the south and south-eastern counties of Scotland, on his return journey to Ayrshire, left the city on Saturday 5th May. It had been arranged that Mr. Ainslie should be his fellow-traveller through the earlier stages of the circuit, and accordingly they proceeded on horseback by way of Haddington and Gifford, crossing the Lammermuirs, and reaching Berrywell in the evening. Burns had purchased at Edinburgh for the occasion, a spirited mare which he had christened "Jenny Geddes," after the heroine of orthodoxy who fired the first shot in the Scotch ecclesiastical warfare of 1637. The reader as he progresses will find the poet from time to time making honorable mention of this mare both in verse and prose. The Journal which follows, only partially given by Currie, was first published entire by Cunningham.

LEFT Edinburgh [May 5, 1787]—Lammermuir Hills miserably dreary, but at times very picturesque. Langedge, a glorious view of the Merse—Reach Berrywell. Old Mr. Ainslie an uncommon character; his hobbies, agriculture, natural philosophy, and politics. In the first, he is unexceptionably the clearest-headed, best-informed man I ever met with; in the other two, very intelligent: as a man of business he has uncommon merit, and by fairly deserving it, has made a very decent independence.* Mrs. Ainslie, an excellent, sensible, cheerful, amiable old woman. Miss Ainslie—her person a little *embonpoint*, but handsome; her face, particularly her eyes, full of sweetness and good humor; she unites three qualities rarely to be found together; keen, solid, penetration; sly, witty observation and remark; and the gentlest, most unaffected female modesty. Douglas, a clever, fine, promising young fellow.—The family-meeting with their brother, my *compagnon de voyage*, very charming; particularly the sister. The whole family remarkably attached to their menials—Mrs. A. full of stories of the sagacity and sense of the little girl in the kitchen. Mr. A. high in the praises of an African, his house-servant—all his people old in his service—Douglas's old nurse came to Berrywell yesterday, to remind them of its being his birthday.†

A Mr. Dudgeon, a poet at times, a worthy remarkable character, natural penetration—a great deal of information, some genius, and extreme modesty.‡

* We have just been shewn a copy of the "Letters of Junius," in one vol. (London 1783), bearing the signature of Burns on its title page, thus:—"Robt. Burns, Poet." On the fly-leaf is the following presentation inscription in the handwriting of old Mr. Ainslie:—"In Testimony of the most sincere Friendship and Esteem, this book is presented to Mr. Robert Burns by

BERRYWELL, 18th May 1787.

ROBERT AINSLIE."

† "Died at Eden, near Banff, Aberdeenshire, 19th September 1850, Douglas Ainslie, Esq. of Cairnbank, Berwickshire, in the 80th year of his age."—*Newspaper Obituary*.

‡ Author of Scottish song "Up amang yon clifly rocks," of which popular lyric he is said to have also composed the pretty melody. He died at Newmains, Whitekirk, 23rd October, 1795.

Sunday 6th,—Went to church at Dunse*—Dr. Bowmaker a man of strong lungs and pretty judicious remark; but ill-skilled in propriety, and altogether unconscious of his want of it.

Monday [7th].—Coldstream—went over to England†—Cornhill—glorious river Tweed—clear and majestic—fine bridge. Dine at Coldstream with Mr. Ainslie and Mr. Foreman—beat Mr. F. in a dispute about Voltaire. Tea at Lennel House with Mr. Brydone‡—Mr. Brydone a most excellent heart, kind, joyous, and benevolent; but a good deal of the French indiscriminate complaisance—from his situation past and present, an admirer of every thing that bears a splendid title, or that possesses a large estate—Mrs. Brydone a most elegant woman in her person and manners; the tones of her voice remarkably sweet—my reception extremely flattering—sleep at Coldstream.

Tuesday [8th]—Breakfast at Kelso—charming situation of Kelso—fine bridge over the Tweed—enchancing views and prospects on both sides of the river, particularly the Scotch side; introduced to Mr. Scott of the

* See Epigram then produced, page 91, *supra*.

† "When we arrived at Coldstream, where the dividing line between Scotland and England is the Tweed, I suggested our going across to the other side by the Coldstream bridge, that Burns might have it to say he *had been in England*. We did so, and were pacing slowly along on English ground, enjoying our walk, when I was astonished to see the poet throw away his hat, and, thus uncovered, look towards Scotland kneeling and with uplifted hands, in an attitude of reverence. I kept silence, while he with extreme emotion and an expression of countenance which I will never forget, prayed for, and blessed his native land most solemnly, by repeating with fine emphasis the two closing stanzas of his *Cottar's Saturday Night*.

'O Scotia! my dear, my native soil,

For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent! &c."

Letter of Robert Ainslie to James Hogg, April 20th, 1834.

‡ Burns in "The Vision," referring to Col. Fullarton, calls him "Brydone's brave ward," because he had travelled under the care of the distinguished gentleman now visited by the poet. Patrick Brydone, Esq., was well-known as author of a "Tour in Sicily and Malta;" Mrs. Brydone was a daughter of Dr. Robertson, the historian; and Miss Brydone, their daughter, a woman of great accomplishments, became Countess of Minto.

Royal Bank—an excellent, modest fellow—fine situation of it—ruins of Roxburgh Castle—a holly-bush growing where James II. of Scotland was accidentally killed by the bursting of a cannon. A small old religious ruin, and a fine old garden planted by the religious, rooted out and destroyed by an English Hottentot, a *maitre d'hotel* of the Duke's, a Mr. Cole. Climate and soil of Berwickshire, and even Roxburghshire, superior to Ayrshire—bad roads. Turnip and sheep husbandry, their great improvements—Mr. M'Dowal, at Caverton Mill, a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, with whom I dined to-day, sold his sheep, ewe and lamb together, at two guineas a piece.—Wash their sheep before shearing—seven or eight pounds of washen wool in a fleece—low markets, consequently low rents—fine lands not above sixteen shillings a Scotch acre—magnificence of farmers and farm-houses—come up Teviot and up Jed to Jedburgh to lie, and so wish myself a good night.

Wednesday [9th.]—Breakfast with Mr. —, in Jedburgh—a squabble between Mrs. —, a crazed, talkative slattern, and a sister of her's, an old maid, respecting a Relief minister. Miss gives Madam the lie; and Madam, by way of revenge, upbraids her that she laid snares to entangle the said minister, then a widower, in the net of matrimony. Go about two miles out of Jedburgh to a roup of parks—meet a polite, soldier-like gentleman, a Captain Rutherford, who had been many years through the wilds of America, a prisoner among the Indians. Charming, romantic situation of Jedburgh, with gardens, orchards, &c., intermingled among the houses—fine old ruins—a once magnificent cathedral, and strong castle. All the towns here have the appearance of old, rude grandeur, but the people extremely idle—Jed a fine romantic little river.

Dine with Captain Rutherford—the Captain a polite fellow, fond of money in his farming way; showed a particular respect to my bardship—his lady exactly a proper matrimonial second part for him. Miss Rutherford a beautiful girl, but too far gone woman to expose so much of a fine swelling bosom—her face very fine.

Return to Jedburgh—walk up Jed with some ladies to be shown Love-lane and Blackburn, two fairy scenes. Introduced to Mr. Potts, writer, a very clever fellow; and Mr. Somerville, the clergyman of the place, a man, and a gentleman, but sadly addicted to punning*—The walking-party of ladies, Mrs. — and Miss —, her sister, before mentioned.—*N. B.*—These two appear still more comfortably ugly and stupid, and bore me most shockingly. Two Miss —, tolerably agreeable. Miss Hope, a tolerably pretty girl, fond of laughing and fun. Miss Lindsay, a good-humored, amiable girl: rather short *et embonpoint*, but handsome, and extremely graceful—beautiful hazel eyes, full of spirit, and sparkling with delicious moisture—an engaging face *un tout ensemble* that speaks her of the first order of female minds—her sister, a bonie, strappin, rosy, sonsie lass. Shake myself loose, after several unsuccessful efforts, of Mrs. and Miss —, and somehow or other, get hold of Miss Lindsay's arm. My heart is thawed into melting pleasure after being so long frozen up in the Greenland bay of indifference, amid the noise and nonsense of Edinburgh. Miss seems very well pleased with my bardship's distinguishing her; and after some slight qualms, which I could easily mark, she sets the titter round at defiance, and kindly allows me to keep my hold: and when parted by the ceremony of my introduction to Mr.

* Dr. Somerville was distinguished as a literary man. It is said that after the appearance of this passage in Currie's life of the Poet, he entirely abandoned the habit of punning. He died in May 1830, aged ninety years, sixty-four of which had been passed in the clerical profession. His son married a lady distinguished in the scientific world; viz., the well-known Mrs. Mary Somerville.

Somerville, she met me half, to resume my situation. *Nota Bene*—The poet within a point and a half of being d-mnably in love—I am afraid my bosom is still nearly as much tinder as ever.

The old, cross-grained, whiggish, ugly, slanderous Miss —, with all the poisonous spleen of a disappointed, ancient maid, stops me very unseasonably to ease her bursting breast, by falling abusively foul on the Miss Lindsays, particularly on my Dulcinea;—I hardly refrain from cursing her to her face for daring to mouth her calumnious slander on one of the finest pieces of the workmanship of Almighty Excellence! Sup at Mr. —'s; vexed that the Miss Lindsays are not of the supper-party, as they only are wanting. Mrs. — and Miss — still improve infernally on my hands.

Set out next morning [10th.]—for Wauchope, the seat of my correspondent, Mrs. Scott—breakfast by the way with Dr. Elliot, an agreeable, good-hearted, climate-beaten old veteran, in the medical line; now retired to a romantic, but rather moorish place, on the banks of the Roole—he accompanies us almost to Wauchope—we traverse the country to the top of Bochester, the scene of an old encampment, and Woolee Hill.

Wauchope.—Mr. Scott exactly the figure and face commonly given to Sancho Panza—very shrewd in his farming matters, and not unfrequently stumbles on what may be called a strong thing rather than a good thing. Mrs. Scott all the sense, taste, intrepidity of face, and bold, critical decision, which usually distinguish female authors.* Sup with Mr. Potts—agreeable party. Breakfast next morning [11th] with

* It was this lady who sent him a rhyming epistle in February preceding, which elicited the beautiful poetic reply printed at page 70, *supra*. She died in February, 1789.

Mr. Somerville—the *bruit* of Miss Lindsay and my bardship, by means of the invention and malice of Miss —. Mr. Somerville sends to Dr. Lindsay, begging him and family to breakfast if convenient, but at all events to send Miss Lindsay; accordingly, Miss Lindsay only comes,—I find Miss Lindsay would soon play the devil with me—I met with some little flattering attentions from her. Mrs. Somerville an excellent, motherly, agreeable woman, and a fine family. Mr. Ainslie and Mrs. S—, junr., with Mr. —, Miss Lindsay, and myself, go to see *Esther*, a very remarkable woman for reciting poetry of all kinds, and sometimes making Scotch doggerel herself—she can repeat by heart almost everything she has ever read, particularly Pope's *Homer* from end to end—has studied *Euclid* by herself, and, in short, is a woman of very extraordinary abilities.—On conversing with her I find her fully equal to the character given of her. She is very much flattered that I send for her, and that she sees a poet who has *put out a book*, as she says.—She is, among other things, a great florist, and is rather past the meridian of once celebrated beauty.*

I walk in *Esther's* garden with Miss Lindsay, and after some little chit-chat of the tender kind, I presented her with a proof print of my *nob*, which she accepted with something more tender than gratitude. She told me many little stories which Miss — had retailed concerning her and me, with prolonging pleasure—God bless her! Was waited on by the Magistrates, and presented with the freedom of the burgh.

Took farewell of Jedburgh, with some melancholy, disagreeable sensations.—Jed, pure be thy crystal streams, and hallowed thy sylvan banks! Sweet Isabella Lindsay, may peace dwell in thy bosom, unin-

* Esther Easton, a woman of extraordinary gifts, was the wife of a common working gardener. She subsequently taught a school, and was ultimately dependent on charity.

terraptured, except by the tumultuous throbbings of rapturous love! That love-kindling eye must beam on another, not on me—that graceful form must bless another's arms, not mine!*

Kelso.—Dine with the Farmer's Club—all gentlemen, talking of high matters—each of them keeps a hunter from thirty to fifty pounds value, and attends the fox-huntings in the county—go out with Mr. Ker, one of the club, and a friend of Mr. Ainslie's to lie. [12th]—Mr. Ker a most gentlemanly, clever, handsome fellow, a widower with some fine children—his mind and manners astonishingly like my dear old friend Robert Muir, in Kilmarnock—everything in Mr. Ker's most elegant—he offers to accompany me in my English tour. Dine with Sir Alexander Don—a pretty clever fellow, but far from being a match for his divine lady.†

A very wet day . . .—Sleep at Stodrig again; and [Sunday 13th] set out for Melrose—visit Dryburgh, a fine old ruined abbey—still bad weather—cross Leader, and come up Tweed to Melrose—dine there, and visit that far-famed, glorious ruin—come to Selkirk, up Ettrick;‡—the whole country hereabout, both on Tweed and Ettrick, remarkably stony.

Monday [14th].—Come to Inverleithen, a famous Spa, and in the vicinity of the palace of Traquhair, where having dined, and drank some Galloway-whey, I here remain till to-morrow—saw “Elibanks and Elibraes,” on the other side of the Tweed.§

* Isabella Lindsay, sister of Dr. Lindsay, we learn from Mr. Chambers, married afterwards a Mr. Adam Armstrong, an employé of the Russian government. “She died young, leaving four children: the youngest is General Robert Armstrong, now [1856] Director of the Imperial Mint at St. Petersburg. Peggy, the younger sister, died not long after the poet's visit, at the age of twenty-two.”

† Lady Harriet Don, sister to the Earl of Glencairn.

‡ Here Burns penned his famous Lament for Mr. Creech's absence from Edinburgh,—“Willie's Awa.”

§ An old free-spoken song which celebrates this locality would be enough in itself to bring the poet twenty miles out of his road to see it.

Tuesday, [15th].—Drank tea yesternight at Pirn, with Mr. Horsburgh.—Breakfasted to-day with Mr. Ballantine of Hollylee.—Proposal for a four-horse team to consist of Mr. Scott of Wauchope, Fittieland : Logan of Logan, Fittiefur : Ballantine of Hollylee, Forewynd : Horsburgh of Horsburgh. Dine at a country inn, kept by a miller in Earlston,* the birth-place and residence of the celebrated Thomas the Rhymer—saw the ruins of his castle—come to Berrywell.

Wednesday, [16th].—Dine at Dunse with the Farmers' Club—company, impossible to do them justice—Rev. Mr. Smith, a famous punster, and Mr. Meikle a celebrated mechanic, and inventor of the threshing-mill.—*Thursday*, [17th], breakfast at Berrywell,† and walk into Dunse to see a famous knife made by a cutler there, and to be presented to an Italian prince.—A pleasant ride with my friend Mr. Robert Ainslie and his sister, to Mr. Thomson's, a man who has newly commenced farmer, and has married a Miss Patty Grieve, formerly a flame of Mr. Robert Ainslie's. Company—Miss Jacky Grieve, an amiable sister of Mrs. Thomson's, and Mr. Hood, an honest, worthy, facetious farmer, in the neighborhood.

* Undoubtedly Burns's reason for making this detour was to see the song-celebrated Cowdenknowes.

† A young man named Symon Gray, the son of a respected citizen of Dunse, who was in the practice of stringing rhymes together which he fancied were meritorious, sent packet after packet of his trash to Berrywell, to elicit Burns's opinion of them. The poet good-humoredly scribbled his judgment of their value by imitating Symon's own style thus:—

" Dear Symon Gray,	Tried all my skill,
The other day,	But find I'm still
When you sent me some rhyme,	Just where I was before.
I could not then	We auld wives' minions
Just ascertain	Give our opinions,
Its worth, for want of time;	Solicited or no;
But now, to-day,	Then of its fau'ts
Good Master Gray,	My honest thoughts
I've read it o'er and o'er,	I'll give, and here they go:—"

Chambers assures us that so rough is the expression of Burns's opinion which follows this introduction, it is not presentable before good company.

Friday [18th].—Ride to Berwick—an idle town, rudely picturesque.—Meet Lord Errol in walking round the walls—his lordship's flattering notice of me.—Dine with Mr. Clunyie, merchant—nothing particular in company or conversation.—Come up a bold shore, and over a wild country to Eyemouth—sup and sleep at Mr. Grieve's.

Saturday [19th].—Spend the day at Mr. Grieve's—made a Royal-arch mason of St. Abb's Lodge.*—Mr. William Grieve, the eldest brother, a joyous, warm-hearted, jolly, clever fellow—takes a hearty glass, and sings a good song. Mr. Robert, his brother, and partner in trade, a good fellow, but says little. Take a sail after dinner. Fishing of all kinds pays tithes at Eyemouth.

Sunday [20th].—A Mr. Robinson, brewer at Ednam, sets out with us to Dunbar.

The Miss Grieves very good girls.—My bardship's heart got a brush from Miss Betsey.

Mr. William Grieve's attachment to the family circle so fond, that when he is out, which by the bye is often the case, he cannot go to bed till he sees if all his sisters are sleeping well :—Pass the famous Abbey of Coldingham, and Pease-bridge. —Call at Mr. Shireff's, where Mr. A. and I dine.—Mr. S. talkative and conceited. I talk of love to Nancy the whole evening, while her brother escorts home some com-

* We quote the following entry from Cunningham's edition :—

“ EYEMOUTH, 19th May, 1787.

“ At a general encampment held this day, the following brethren were made Royal-arch Masons—namely, Robert Burns, from the Lodge of St. James's, Tarbolton, Ayrshire, and Robert Ainslie, from the Lodge of St. Luke's, Edinburgh, by James Carmichael, Wm. Grieve, Daniel Dow, John Clay, Robert Grieve, &c., &c. Robert Ainslie paid one guinea admission dues; but on account of R. Burns's remarkable poetical genius, the encampment unanimously agreed to admit him gratis, and consider themselves honoured by having a man of such shining abilities for one of their companions.

“ Extracted from the Minute Book of the Lodge by THOS. BOWHILL.”

panions like himself. — Sir James Hall of Dunglass,* having heard of my being in the neighborhood, comes to Mr. Shireff's to breakfast — [21st] takes me to see his fine scenery on the stream of Dunglass — Dunglass the most romantic, sweet place I ever saw — Sir James and his lady a pleasant happy couple. He points out a walk for which he has an uncommon respect, as it was made by an aunt of his, to whom he owes much.

Miss — will accompany me to Dunbar, by way of making a parade of me as a sweetheart of hers, among her relations. She mounts an old cart horse, as huge and as lean as a house; a rusty old side-saddle without girth or stirrup, but fastened on with an old pillion-girth — herself as fine as hands could make her, in cream-colored riding-clothes, hat and feather, &c. — I, ashamed of my situation, ride like the devil, and almost shake her to pieces on old Jolly — get rid of her by refusing to call at her uncle's with her.

Past through the most glorious corn-country I ever saw, till I reach Dunbar, a neat little town. — Dine with Provost Fall, an eminent merchant, and most respectable character, but undescribable, as he exhibits no marked traits. Mrs. Fall, a genius in painting; fully more clever in the fine arts and sciences than my friend Lady Wauchope, without her consummate assurance of her own abilities. — Call with Mr. Robinson (whom, by the bye, I find to be a worthy, much respected man, very modest; warm, social heart, which with less good sense than his would be perhaps with the children of prim precision and pride, rather inimical to that respect which is man's due from man) — with him I call on Miss Clarke, a maiden in the Scotch phrase, "*Guid enough, but no brent new.*" a

* He was the father of Captain Basil Hall, so well known by his many popular works.

clever woman, with tolerable pretensions to remark and wit; while time had blown the blushing bud of bashful modesty into the flower of easy confidence. She wanted to see what sort of *raree show* an author was; and to let him know, that though Dunbar was but a little town, yet it was not destitute of people of parts.

Breakfast next morning [22nd] at Skateraw, at Mr. Lee's, a farmer of great note.—Mr. Lee, an excellent, hospitable, social fellow, rather oldish—warm-hearted and chatty—a most judicious, sensible farmer. Mr. Lee detains me till next morning—Company at dinner—my rev. acquaintance Dr. Bowmaker, a reverend, rattling old fellow; two sea lieutenants; a cousin of the landlord's, a fellow whose looks are of that kind which deceived me in a gentleman at Kelso, and has often deceived me—a goodly handsome figure and face, which incline one to give them credit for parts which they have not; Mr. Clarke, a much cleverer fellow, but whose looks a little cloudy, and his appearance rather ungainly, with an every-day observer may prejudice the opinion against him; Dr. Brown, a medical young gentleman from Dunbar, a fellow whose face and manners are open and engaging.—Leave Skateraw for Dunse next day [23], along with Collector —, a lad of slender abilities and bashfully diffident to an extreme.

Found Miss Ainslie, the amiable, the sensible, the good-humored, the sweet Miss Ainslie, all alone at Berrywell.—Heavenly powers who know the weakness of human hearts, support mine! What happiness must I see only to remind me that I cannot enjoy it!

Lammermuir Hills, from East Lothian to Dunse very wild.—Dine with the Farmers' Club at Kelso. Sir John Hume and Mr. Lumsden there, but nothing worth remembrance when the following circumstance is considered—I walk into Dunse before dinner, and

out to Berrywell in the evening with Miss Ainslie—how well-bred, how frank, how good she is! Charming Rachel! may thy bosom never be wrung by the evils of this life of sorrows, or by the villainy of this world's sons!*

Thursday [24th].—Mr. Ker and I set out to dine at Mr. Hood's on our way to England.

I am taken extremely ill with strong feverish symptoms, and take a servant of Mr. Hood's to watch me all night—embittering remorse scares my fancy at the gloomy forebodings of death.—I am determined to live for the future in such a manner as not to be scared at the approach of Death—I am sure I could meet him with indifference, but for “the something beyond the grave.”—Mr. Hood agrees to accompany us to England if we will wait till Sunday.

Friday [25th].—I go with Mr. Hood to see a roup of an unfortunate farmer's stock—rigid economy, and decent industry, do you preserve me from being the principal *dramatis persona* in such a scene of horror.

Meet my good old friend Mr. Ainslie, who calls on Mr. Hood in the evening to take farewell of my bardship. This day I feel myself warm with sentiments of gratitude to the Great Preserver of men, who has kindly restored me to health and strength once more.

A pleasant walk with my young friend Douglas Ainslie, a sweet, modest, clever young fellow.

Sunday, 27th May.—Cross Tweed, and traverse the moors through a wild country till I reach Alnwick—Alnwick Castle a seat of the Duke of Northumberland, furnished in a most princely manner.—A Mr.

* [Miss Ainslie died unmarried—a good-looking, elderly lady, of very agreeable manners.—*Chambers.*]

Wilkin, agent of His Grace's, shows us the house and policies. Mr. Wilkin, a discreet, sensible, ingenious man.

Monday [28th].—Come, still through by-ways, to Warkworth, where we dine.—Hermitage and old castle. Warkworth situated very picturesque, with Coquet Island, a small rocky spot, the seat of an old monastery, facing it a little in the sea; and the small but romantic river Coquet, running through it.—Sleep at Morpeth, a pleasant enough little town, and on next day [29], to Newcastle.—Meet with a very agreeable, sensible fellow, a Mr. Chattox, who shows us a great many civilities, and who dines and sups with us.

Wednesday [30th].—Left Newcastle early in the morning, and rode over a fine country to Hexham to breakfast—from Hexham to Wardrue, the celebrated Spa, where we slept.

Thursday [31st].—Reach Longtown to dine, and part there with my good friends Messrs. Hood and Ker—A hiring day in Longtown—I am uncommonly happy to see so many young folks enjoying life.—I come to Carlisle. (Meet a strange enough romantic adventure by the way, in falling in with a girl and her married sister—the girl, after some overtures of gallantry on my side, sees me a little cut with the bottle, and offers to take me in for a Gretna-green affair. I not being such a gull as she imagines, make an appointment with her, by way of *vive la bagatelle*, to hold a conference on it when we reach Town.—I meet her in town and give her a brush of caressing, and a bottle of cyder, but finding herself *un peu trompée* in her man she sheers off.) Next day [1st June,] I meet my good friend, Mr. Mitchell, and walk with him round the town and its environs,

and through his printing works, &c.—four or five hundred people employed, many of them women and children. Dine with Mr. Mitchell, and leave Carlisle. Come by the coast to Annan. Overtaken on the way by a curious old fish of a shoemaker and miner from Cumberland mines.

[*Here the Manuscript abruptly terminates. The Journal includes a period of twenty-six days.*]

In connexion with the foregoing Journal, we must not omit the following items of correspondence :—

(¹) TO WILLIAM CREECH, ESQ., LONDON.

ENCLOSING POEM, "WILLIE'S AWA." (page 92, *supra*.)

(CROMEK, 1808.)

SELKIRK, 13th May 1787.

MY HONORED FRIEND,—The enclosed I have just wrote, nearly extempore, in a solitary Inn in Selkirk, after a miserable, wet day's riding. I have been over most of East Lothian, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirk shires, and next week I begin a tour through the north of England. Yesterday, I dined with Lady Harriot, sister to my noble Patron—*Quem Deus conservet!*—I would write till I would tire you as much with dull prose, as I dare say by this time you are with wretched verse; but I am jaded to death; so, with a grateful farewell, I have the honor to be, good Sir, yours sincerely,
B.

(1) TO MR. PETER HILL,

CARE OF MR. CREECH, BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.*)

DR. SIR,—If Mr. Alex^r. Pattison, or Mr. Cowan, from Paisley, or in general, any other of those to whom I have sent copies on credit before, apply to you, you will give them what number they demand, when they require it, provided always that those who are non-subscribers shall pay one shilling more than subscribers. This I write to you when I am miserably fou, consequently it must be the sentiments of my heart.

ROBERT BURNS.

May 17th 1787.(2) TO MR. PATTISON, BOOKSELLER,
PAISLEY.†

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1835.)

BERRYWELL, near DUNSE, *May 17th, 1787.*

DEAR SIR,—I am sorry I was out of Edinburgh, making a slight pilgrimage to the classic scenes of this country, when I was favored with yours of the 11th instant, enclosing an order of the Paisley Banking Company on the Royal Bank, for Twenty-two pounds, seven shillings sterling, payment in full, after carriage deducted, for ninety copies of my book I

*The original of this note is in the Poet's monument at Edinburgh: the upper portion of the address is torn off, but it is clear from the next letter that this was addressed to Mr. Hill.

†Chambers informs us that this individual was not a "bookseller," but a manufacturer, and suggests that the bard's addressing him as such, was a playful allusion to his friendly activity in disposing of copies of the book. The number of copies subscribed for in Paisley was eighty-four. A careful list of the subscribers, with biographical notes, was published in 1871 by Mr. David Semple, F.S.A., Paisley. Among these we find Alex. Wilson, the poet and ornithologist, who took two copies. Another of the subscribers was John Wilson, merchant, father of Professor John Wilson of Edinburgh.

sent you. According to your motions, I see you will have left Scotland before this reaches you, otherwise I would send you "Holy Willie" with all my heart. I was so hurried that I absolutely forgot several things I ought to have minded, among the rest, sending books to Mr. Cowan, but any order of yours will be answered at Creech's shop. You will please remember that non-subscribers, pay six shillings, this is Creech's profit; but those who have subscribed, though their names have been neglected in the printed list, which is very incorrect, are supplied at the subscription-price. I was not at Glasgow, nor do I intend for London; and I think Mrs. Fame is very idle to tell so many lies on a poor poet. When you or Mr. Cowan write for copies, if you should want any, direct to Mr. Hill, at Mr. Creech's shop, and I write to Mr. Hill by this post, to answer either of your orders. Hill is Mr. Creech's first clerk, and Creech himself is presently in London. I suppose I shall have the pleasure, against your return to Paisley, of assuring you how much I am, dear Sir, your obliged humble servant,

R. B.

(¹) TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL.

CLASSICAL MASTER, HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.*

(CROMEK, 1808.)

CARLISLE, *June 1st, 1787,*
(*or, I believe, the 31st o' May, rather.*)

KIND, HONEST-HEARTED WILLIE,—I'm sitten down here, after seven and forty miles ridin, e'en as for-

* "Nicol," writes Lockhart, "was a man of quick parts and considerable learning, who had risen from a rank as humble as Burns's: from the beginning an enthusiastic admirer, and, ere long, a constant associate of the poet, and a most dangerous associate; for, with a warm heart, the man united a fierce irascible temper, a scorn of many of the decencies of life, a noisy contempt of Religion, at least of the Religious institutions of his country, and a violent pro-

jesket and forniaw'd as a forfough'en cock, to gie you some notion o' my land-lower-like stravaguin sen the sorrowful hour that I sheuk hands and parted wi' *Auld Reekie*.

My auld, ga'd gleyde o' a meere has huchyall'd up hill and down brae, in Scotland and England, as teugh and birnie as a vera devil wi' me. It's true, she's as poor's a sangmaker and as hard's a kirk, and tipper-taipers when she taks the gate, first like a lady's gentlewoman in a minuwae, or a hen on a het girdle, but she's a yauld, poutherrie Girran for a' that, and has a stomach like Willie Stalker's meere that wad hae disgeested tumbler-wheels, for she'll whip me aff her five stimparts o' the best aits at a down-sittin and ne'er fash her thumb. When ance her ringbanes and spavies, her cruicks and cramps, are fairly soup'l'd, she beets to, beets to, and ay the hindmost hour the tightest. I could wager her price to a thretty pennies, that, for twa or three wooks ridin at fifty mile a day, the deil-sticket a five galloppers acqueesh Clyde and Whithorn could cast saut on her tail.

I hae dander'd owre a' the kintra frae Dunbar to Selcraig, and hae forgather'd wi' mony a guid fallow and monie a weelfar'd hizzie. I met wi' twa dink quines in particular, ane o' them a sonsie, fine fodgel lass, baith braw and bonie; the tither was a clean-shankit, straught, tight, weelfar'd winch, as blythe's a lintwhite on a flowerie thorn, and as sweet and modest's a new blawn plumrose in a hazle shaw. They were baith bred to mainers by the beuk, and onie ane o' them had as muckle smeddum and rumblgumtion

pensity for the bottle. He was one of those who would fain believe themselves to be men of genius; and that genius is a sufficient apology for trampling under foot all the old vulgar rules of prudence and sobriety—being on both points equally mistaken. Of Nicol's letters to Burns, and about him, I have seen many that have never been, and probably that never will be, printed—cumbrous and pedantic effusions, exhibiting nothing that one can imagine to have been pleasing to the poet, except what was enough to redeem all imperfections—namely, a rapturous admiration of Burns's genius."

as the half o' some presbytries that you and I baith ken. They play'd me sik a deevil o' a shavie that I daur say if my harigals were turn'd out, ye wad see twa nicks i' the heart o' me like the mark o' a kail-whittle in a castock.

I was gaun to write you a lang pystle, but, Gude forgie me ! I gat mysel sae notouriously bitchify'd the day, after kail-time, that I can hardly stoiter but and ben.

My best respecks to the guidwife and a' our common friens, especiall Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank and the honest guidman o' Jock's Lodge.*

I'll be in Dumfries the morn gif the beast be to the fore, and the branks bide hale. Gude be wi' you, Willie !
Amen !—

Currie has remarked concerning the Border excursion, "That on the banks of the Tweed and the Teviot, our bard should find nymphs that were beautiful is what might be confidently presumed. Two of these are particularly described in his Journal. But it does not appear that the scenery or its inhabitants produced any effort of his muse, as was to have been wished and expected. From Annan, Burns proceeded to Dumfries, and thence through Sanquhar, to Mauchline in Ayrshire, where he arrived about the 8th of June 1787, after a long absence of six busy and eventful months." After all, however, Burns had one object of worldly business in his journey; namely, to examine the farms on the estate of Dalswinton, near Dumfries, the proprietor of which had, on learning that the poet designed to return to his original calling, expressed a strong wish to have him for his tenant.

"It will be easily conceived," adds Currie, "with what pleasure and pride he was received by his mother, his brothers, and sisters. He had left them poor, and comparatively friendless: he returned to them high in public estimation, and easy in his circumstances. He returned to them unchanged in his ardent affections, and ready to share with them to the uttermost farthing, the pittance that Fortune had be-

* Louis Cauvin, French teacher?

stowed." From the following letter, penned three days after his arrival, it appears that he did not at once proceed to Mossiel, but slept one or more nights at his old howff, the Whitefoord Arms. A twelvemonth after this period, his words to Mrs. Dunlop, in reference to a domestic event which occurred in March 1788, tell the fact as delicately as language can express it:—"On my *eclatant* return to Mauchline, I was made very welcome to visit my girl, and the usual circumstances began to betray her, at the time I was laid up a cripple in Edinburgh."

(³) TO MR. JAMES SMITH,

AT MILLER AND SMITH'S OFFICE, LINLITHGOW.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MAUCHLINE, 11th June 1787.

MY EVER DEAR SIR,—I date this from Mauchline, where I arrived on Friday even last. I slept at John Dow's, and called for my daughter; Mr. Hamilton and family; your mother, sister, and brother; my quondam Eliza, &c., all, all well. If any thing had been wanting to disgust me completely at Armour's family, their mean, servile compliance would have done it.

Give me a spirit like my favorite hero, Milton's Satan:

"Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou profoundest hell
Receive thy new possessor? one who brings
A mind not to be changed by *place* or *time*!"

I cannot settle to my mind.—Farming, the only thing of which I know anything, and heaven above knows, but little do I understand of that, I cannot, dare not risk on farms as they are. If I do not fix, I will go for Jamaica. Should I stay in an unsettled state at home, I would only dissipate my little fortune, and ruin what I intend shall compensate my

little ones, for the stigma I have brought on their names.

I shall write you more at length soon ; as this letter costs you no postage, if it be worth reading you cannot complain of your penny-worth. — I am ever, my dear Sir, yours,

R. B.

P. S.—The cloot* has unfortunately broke, but I have provided a fine buffalo-horn, on which I am going to affix the same cypher which you will remember was on the lid of the cloot.

“He returned,” writes Lockhart thus powerfully, “the whole country ringing with his praises from a capital in which he was known to have formed the wonder and delight of the polite and the learned ; if not rich, yet with more money already than any of his kindred had ever hoped to see him possess, and with prospects of future patronage and permanent elevation in the scale of society which might have dazzled steadier eyes than those of maternal and fraternal affection. The prophet had at last honor in his own country ; but the haughty spirit that had preserved its balance in Edinburgh was not likely to lose it in Mauchline, and we have him writing from the *Auld Clay biggin* on the 18th of June, in terms as strongly expressive as any that ever came from his pen, of that jealous pride which formed the groundwork of his character ; that dark suspiciousness of fortune, which the subsequent course of his history too well justified ; that nervous intolerance of condescension, and consummate scorn of meanness which attend him through life, and made the study of his species, for which Nature had given him such extraordinary qualifications, the source of more pain than was ever counterbalanced by the exquisite capacity for enjoyment with which he was also endowed. There are few of his letters in which more of the dark places of his spirit come to light.”

* Snuff-boxes are often made of polished sheep-cloots, or hoofs. The horn which the poet procured and mounted as a snuff-box at this time was probably the same one he afterwards presented to Mr. Bacon, the landlord of Brownhill inn. It is a curious fact that Chambers not only omits this postscript, but his version of the letter differs in some points from that supplied by Cunningham.

(2) TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL, EDINBURGH.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

Mauchline, 18th June, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I am now arrived safe in my native country, after a very agreeable jaunt, and have the pleasure to find all my friends well. I breakfasted with your grey-headed, reverend friend, Mr. Smith; and was highly pleased both with the cordial welcome he gave me, and his most excellent appearance and sterling good sense.

I have been with Mr. Miller at Dalswinton, and am to meet him again in August. From my view of the lands and his reception of my bardship, my hopes in that business are rather mended; but still they are but slender.

I am quite charmed with Dumfries folks. Mr. Burnside, the clergyman, in particular, is a man whom I shall ever gratefully remember; and his wife, gude forgie me! I had almost broke the tenth commandment on her account. Simplicity, elegance, good sense, sweetness of disposition, good humor, kind hospitality, are the constituents of her manner and heart; in short—but if I say one word more about her, I shall be directly in love with her.

I never, my friend, thought mankind very capable of anything generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding, independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in

that great personage, SATAN. 'Tis true, I have just now a little cash ; but I am afraid the star that hitherto has shed its malignant, purpose-blasting rays full in my zenith ; that noxious planet so baneful in its influences to the rhyming tribe, I much dread it is not yet beneath my horizon. Misfortune dodges the path of human life ; the poetic mind finds itself miserably deranged in, and unfit for, the walks of business ; add to all, that thoughtless follies and hare-brained whims, like so many *ignes fatui*, eternally diverging from the right line of sober discretion, sparkle with stepbewitching blaze in the idly-gazing eyes of the poor heedless bard, till pop, "he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again." God grant this may be an unreal picture with respect to me ; but should it not, I have very little dependence on mankind. I will close my letter with this tribute my heart bids me pay you—the many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I have, in life, I have felt along the lines, and, damn them, they are almost all of them of such frail contexture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune ; but from you, my ever dear Sir, I look with confidence for the apostolic love that shall wait on me "through good report and bad report"—the love which Solomon emphatically says "is strong as death." My compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and all the circle of our common friends.

R. B.

P.S.—I shall be in Edinburgh about the latter end of July.

Attached as Burns was to his only remaining parent, and to his brothers and sisters, and desirous as he may have been to make them partakers of his good fortune, we are not to wonder, says Lockhart, "after his exciting winter and spring, he should, just at this time have found himself incapable of sitting down contentedly for any considerable period together

in so humble and quiet a circle as that of Mossgiel. His appetite for wandering appears to have been only sharpened by his Border excursion."

Dr. Currie tells his readers that after remaining with his relations a few days, Burns set out on a journey to the West Highlands, but that no particulars of the tour have been found among his manuscripts, except the following fragment of a letter written during his progress, and a portion of another letter addressed to a friend after his return, giving some account of the latter stages of his excursion. Rumor and Tradition, however, have not been backward in their endeavors to fill up the blanks in the narrative. Possibly the angry Epigram at Inverary is the most interesting relic.

"Whoe'er he be that sojourn here,
I pity much his case,
Unless he comes to wait upon
The Lord *their* God, "His Grace."
There's naething here but Highland pride,
And Highland scab and hunger:
If Providence has sent me here,
'Twas surely in an anger."

"His Grace" at that period was John V., Duke of Argyll, about sixty-four years old, and the Duchess was Elizabeth Gunning, who had been formerly Duchess of Hamilton, mother of Douglas, Duke of Hamilton, one of the competitors in the great Douglas cause, but who was unsuccessful in his suit. The poet was mounted on his favorite mare "Jenny Geddes," and deemed himself as good as any of the host of tourists who applied for accommodation at the principal Inn, and could ill brook to be told that every stall in the stables and all the corners of the house were filled. We can only conjecture in what mood he clapped his spurs to Jenny's groin and scampered off.

(¹) TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE, EDINBURGH.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

ARROCHAR, NEAR CROCHAIRBAS, BY LOCH LONG,
June 28th, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR, I write you this on my tour through
a country where savage streams tumble over savage

mountains, thinly overspread with savage flocks, which starvingly support as savage inhabitants. My last stage was Inverary—to-morrow night's stage, Dumbarton. I ought sooner to have answered your kind letter, but you know I am a man of many sins.

* * * * *

It is certain that during this excursion Burns picked up some acquaintanceship with Mr. John M'Auley, Town Clerk of Dumbarton, to whom we find him addressing an excellent letter about two years after this period. There are some retailers of gossip who are fain to make believe that the Poet was publicly entertained at Dumbarton on this occasion and presented with the freedom of the town. However, official and all other records are silent on this subject, which circumstance is attempted to be explained by suggesting that the Rev. James Oliphant, parish minister there, had influence enough with the public authorities to cause the record of that transaction to be suppressed. A motive for this supposed clerical interference is pointed to in the fact that Burns in his poem called "The Ordination" had referred to Oliphant as an enemy to Common-sense. The poet in fact never saw Oliphant; for he was but a youth of fifteen, when the latter was translated from Kilmarnock to Dumbarton.

(⁴) TO MR. JAMES SMITH, LINLITHGOW.

(CURRIE'S 4th Ed., 1803.)

June 30th, 1787.

* * * * *

On our return, at a Highland gentleman's hospitable mansion, we fell in with a merry party, and danced till the ladies left us, at three in the morning. Our dancing was none of the French or English insipid formal movements; the ladies sung Scotch songs like angels, at intervals; then we flew at *Bab at the Bowster, Tullochgorum, Loch Erroch-side, &c.*, like midges sporting in the mottie sun, or craws prognosticating a storm in a hairst day. When the dear lasses

left us, we ranged round the bowl till the good-fellow hour of six ; except a few minutes that we went out to pay our devotions to the glorious lamp of day peering over the towering top of Ben-lomond. We all kneeled ; our worthy landlord's son held the bowl ; each man a full glass in his hand, and I as priest, repeated some rhyming nonsense, like Thomas-a-Rhymer's prophecies I suppose. After a small refreshment of the gifts of Somnus, we proceeded to spend the day on Lochlomond, and reach Dumbarton in the evening. We dined at another good fellow's house, and consequently push'd the bottle : when we went out to mount our horses, we found ourselves "No verra fou but gaylie yet." My two friends and I rode soberly down the Loch side, till by came a Highlandman at the gallop, on a tolerably good horse, but which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather. We scorned to be outgalloped by a Highlandman, so off we started, whip and spur. My companions, though seemingly gayly mounted, fell sadly astern ; but my old mare, Jenny Geddes, one of the Rosinante family, she strained past the Highlandman in spite of all his efforts with the hair halter : just as I was passing him Donald wheeled his horse as if to cross before me to mar my progress, when down came his horse, and threw his rider's breckless a—e in a clipt hedge ; and down came Jenny Geddes over all, and my bardship between her and the Highlandman's horse. Jenny Geddes trod over me with such cautious reverence that matters were not so bad as might well have been expected ; so I came off with a few cuts and bruises, and a thorough resolution to be a pattern of sobriety for the future.

I have yet fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am, just as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, rattling, aimless, idle fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon. I was going to

say a wife too ; but that must never be my blessed lot. I am but a younger son of Parnassus, and like other younger sons of great families, I may intrigue if I choose to run all risks, but must not marry.

I am afraid I have almost ruined one source, the principal one, indeed, of my former happiness—that eternal propensity I always had to fall in love. My heart no more glows with feverish raptures, I have no paradisaical evening interviews, stolen from the restless cares and prying inhabitants of this weary world. I have only. . . . This last is one of your distant acquaintances, has a fine figure, and elegant manners ; and, in the train of some great folks whom you know, has seen the politest quarters in Europe. I do like her a good deal ; but what piques me is her conduct at the commencement of our acquaintance. I frequently visited her when I was in [Edinburgh?] and after passing regularly the intermediate degrees between the distant formal bow and the familiar grasp round the waist, I ventured, in my careless way, to talk of friendship in rather ambiguous terms ; and after her return to [Harvieston?], I wrote to her in the same style. Miss, construing my words farther than even I intended, flew off in a tangent of female dignity and reserve, like a mounting lark in an April morning ; and wrote me an answer which measured me out very completely, what an immense way I had to travel before I could reach the climate of her favor. But I am an old hawk at the sport, and wrote her such a cool, deliberate, prudent reply, as brought my bird from her aerial towerings, pop, down at my foot, like Corporal Trim's hat.

As for the rest of my acts, and my wars, and all my wise sayings, and why my mare was called Jenny Geddes ; they shall be recorded in a few weeks hence at Linlithgow, in the chronicles of your memory, by

ROBERT BURNS.

(4) TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND, EDINBURGH.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MOSSGIEL, 7th July 1787.

MY DEAR RICHMOND,—I am all impatience to hear of your fate since the old confounder of right and wrong has turned you out of place, by his journey to answer his indictment at the bar of the other world. He will find the practice of the court so different from the practice in which he has for so many years been thoroughly hackneyed, that his friends, if he had any connections truly of that kind, which I rather doubt, may well tremble for his sake. His chicane, his left-handed wisdom, which stood so firmly by him, to such good purpose here, like other accomplices in robbery and plunder, will, now the piratical business is blown, in all probability turn king's evidence, and then the devil's bagpiper will touch him off "Bundle and go!"

If he has left you any legacy, I beg your pardon for all this; if not, I know you will swear to every word I said about him.

I have lately been rambling over by Dumbarton and Inverary, and running a drunken race on the side of Loch Lomond with a wild Highlandman; his horse, which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather, zigzagged across before my old spavin'd hunter, whose name is Jenny Geddes, and down came the Highlandman, horse and all, and down came Jenny and my bardship; so I have got such a skinful of bruises and wounds, that I shall be at least four weeks before I dare venture on my journey to Edinburgh.

Not one new thing under the sun has happened in Mauchline since you left it. I hope this will find you as comfortably situated as formerly, or, if Heaven

pleases, more so ; but, at all events, I trust you will let me know of course how matters stand with you, well or ill. 'Tis but poor consolation to tell the world when matters go wrong ; but you know very well your connection and mine stands on a different footing,—I am ever, my dear friend, yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

We have thought it well not to interrupt the narrative supplied by the foregoing three letters, to point out that Chambers throws out the reasonable suggestion that on this occasion Burns may have been drawn towards Greenock and the West Highlands by his feelings towards the lately deceased Mary Campbell. "Imagination," he says, "fondly pauses to behold him stretched on her grave in the West Kirk Yard, bewailing her untimely severance from his arms. On these points, however, we have only conjecture, and the somewhat remarkable circumstance that this tour commences with a sort of mystery much like that with which he has contrived to invest the whole story of Highland Mary."

The latter portion of his letter to James Smith speaks very plainly regarding the disengaged state of his affections in love-matters—"My heart no more glows with feverish raptures. I have no paradisaical evening interviews, stolen from the restless cares and prying inhabitants of this weary world. I have only This last is one of your distant acquaintances. . . . I do like her a good deal," &c. Chambers observes that "no safe conjecture can be formed as to the person here meant, beyond that of her being an Ayrshire lady." We would narrow the uncertainty, by saying that she must have been from the neighborhood of Mauchline, if she was more or less known to James Smith, who was born there, and had only recently and for the first time left the district. And moreover, when she is described as possessing "a fine figure and elegant manners, and in the train of some great folks (known to Smith) has seen the politest quarters of Europe," we are shut up to the belief that Burns here refers to none of the "Belles of Mauchline" already celebrated by "Rob Mossgiel," but to a lady of some quality, perhaps Peggy Chalmers, daughter of Mr. Chalmers of Fingland, sometime a farmer in the neighborhood of Mauchline, where indeed Miss Chalmers had lived prior to her removal to Edinburgh, on the death of her father. That she had passed some period

of her youth on the Continent with her elder sister Lady Mackenzie, may be presumed from the fact, that she herself spent the latter years of her long widowhood at Pau in the South of France. Her mother was a sister of Gavin Hamilton's stepmother, and also a sister of Mrs. Tait of Harvieston: of the poet's intercourse with that circle the reader will learn more in due course.

(4) To ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., AYR.

WITH COPY OF ELEGY FOR SIR JAMES HUNTER BLAIR.

(DR. WADDELL'S ED., 1869.)

MAUCHLINE, [14th July 1787.]

MY HONORED FRIEND,—The melancholy occasion of the foregoing Poem affects not only individuals but a country. That I have lost a friend, is but repeating after Caledonia. This copy, rather an incorrect one, I beg you will accept, till I have an opportunity in person, which I expect to have on Tuesday first, of assuring you how sincerely I ever am, honored Sir, your oft obliged,

ROBT. BURNS.

MR. HAMILTON'S OFFICE,
*Saturday Evening.**

*In supplement to what we have said in our note to this Elegy, p. 102, *supra*, we may observe that its subject was a son of John Hunter, Esq., of Milneholm. He was born in 1740, and in 1770 assumed the name of Hunter Blair on his marriage to Jane, the daughter and heiress of Blair of Dunskey. As one of the partners of the banking house of Sir William Forbes & Co., he was well known and much esteemed. In June 1786 he was created a baronet, while Lord Provost of Edinburgh and M.P. for that city. He died somewhat suddenly on 1st July 1787, and his eldest son and successor, Sir James, dying unmarried in 1800, the succession devolved on his second son, Sir David Hunter Blair of Blairquhan, Bart., who survived till 26th Dec. 1857. The latter was succeeded by his second son Sir Edward, born in 1818, who in 1850 married Miss Wauchope, granddaughter of Andrew Wauchope, Esq., of Niddry-Merschell, Midlothian.

The name of the late Sir David was long familiar to Protestant Scotland from the imprint on the title pages of its Bibles, as principal partner of the firm of "Sir D. Hunter Blair and J. Bruce, Printers to the King's most excellent Majesty."

(²) TO MR. PETER HILL, AT MR. CREECH'S,
EDINBURGH.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

DR. SIR,—I have just got a letter from Scot the Bookbinder, where he tells me he needs a little money at present. I have written him to call on you ; and I beg you will pay him his acc^t. or give him part payment, as you see proper.

When Mr. Creech returns, I beg you will let me know by first convenient Post,—I am, dear Sir, your very humble serv^t.

ROBT. BURNS.

MAUCHLINE, 19th July 1787.

(²) TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE, JUNR.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1835.)

MY DEAR AINSLIE,—There is one thing for which I set great store by you as a friend, and it is this—that I have not a friend upon earth, besides yourself, to whom I can talk nonsense without forfeiting some degree of his esteem. Now, to one like me, who never cares for speaking anything else but nonsense, such a friend as you is an invaluable treasure. I was never a rogue, but have been a fool all my life ; and, in spite of all my endeavors, I see now plainly that I shall never be wise. Now it rejoices my heart to have met with such a fellow as you, who, though you are not just such a hopeless fool as I, yet I trust you will never listen so much to the temptations of the devil, as to grow so very wise that you will in the least disrespect an honest fellow because he is a fool. In short, I have set you down as the staff of my old age, when

the whole list of my friends will, after a decent share of pity, have forgot me.

“ Though in the morn comes sturt and strife,
Yet joy may come at noon;
And I hope to live a merry, merry life,
When a’ thir days are done.”

Write me soon, were it but a few lines just to tell me how that good sagacious man, your father, is—that kind, dainty body your mother—that strapping chield your brother Douglas—and my friend Rachel, who is as far before Rachel of old, as she was before her blear-eyed sister Leah.

ROBT. BURNS.

MAUCHLINE, 23rd July 1787.

Among the families of some position whom the poet was introduced to shortly after he reached Edinburgh was that of Macleod of Raasay, one of whose accomplished daughters had been married to Col. James Mure Campbell, of Rowallan, who, in 1782, succeeded to the Earldom of Loudon. The lady having died in 1780, shortly after the birth of her first-born child—a daughter, Flora, became Countess of Loudon on the death of her father in 1786, and the upbringing of the infant was committed to her aunts, the Misses Macleod, while Mr. Gavin Hamilton had charge of the Loudon estates. This explains how Burns became acquainted with the family. The old laird, John Macleod, who had Johnson and Boswell for his guests at Raasay in 1773, died at Edinburgh in December 1786, in his seventieth year; and his son, John Macleod, also died there on 20th July 1787. On this latter occasion Burns composed some beautiful consolatory verses (given at p. 81, Vol. II.), intended for the special comfort of Miss Isabella Macleod with whom he had contracted “a particular friendship” while in Edinburgh.

Reverting to a passage in the poet’s letter to James Smith of 30th June 1787, we are reminded of a masonic incident related by Professor Dugald Stewart in his beautiful reminiscences of Burns, supplied to Dr. Currie. The passage in the letter is this :—“I have yet fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life; I am, just as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, aimless, idle fellow.” Our quotation from

Professor Stewart is as follows :—"In summer 1787 I passed some weeks in Ayrshire, and saw Burns occasionally. I think he told me that he had made an excursion that season to the West Highlands, and that he also visited what Beattie calls the Arcadian ground of Scotland, upon the banks of the Teviot and the Tweed. In the course of the same season I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a Mason Lodge in Mauchline where Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short unpremeditated compliments to different individuals from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and everything he said was happily conceived, and forcibly, as well as fluently expressed. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore elocution."

From the books of St. James's Tarbolton Lodge, we are happy to be enabled now to lay before the reader, a copy of the poet's own minute of the Lodge meeting above referred to by Professor Stewart. This was one of the occasions referred to by Burns at page 161 *supra*, on which he met the brother of "The Lass of Ballochmyle" on terms of some equality.

MASON LODGE MINUTE.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

MAUCHLINE, 25th July 1787.

THIS night the Deputation of the Lodge met at Mauchline, and entered Brother Alexander Allison of Barnmuir an apprentice. Likewise admitted Brs. Professor Stuart of Cathrine, and Claude Alexander, Esq., of Ballochmyle; Claude Neilson, Esq., Paisley; John Farquhar Gray, Esq., of Gilmiscroft; and Dr. George Grierson, Glasgow,* Honorary Members of the Lodge.

ROBT. BURNS, D.M.

We have now brought the reader down to 2nd August 1787, the date of the poet's autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore.

* This is probably the Dr. Grierson, whom Waddell supposes to have accompanied Burns in his excursion to Inverary and the West-Highlands.—J. H.

(See Vol. I, p. 332). On the 7th of that month Burns arrived in Edinburgh, which became again his head-quarters for even a more lengthened period than was embraced in his first sojourn there. He had in prospect an extensive tour to the North Highlands along with his friend, Mr. William Nicol, the High School teacher, and he appears to have, for a fortnight or thereby, accepted a lodgement in Nicol's house.

[The letter to Dr. Moore, dated Aug. 2nd, 1787 (in which Burns gives his autobiography), which should have appeared at this place, has been transferred to page 332, Vol. I., for the reasons stated in the Introduction at page 328, Vol. I.]

(³) TO MR. ARCHIBALD LAWRIE.

(CHAMBERS ED., 1856.)

EDINBURGH, 14th August 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,—Here am I—that is all I can tell you of that unaccountable being myself. What I am doing no mortal can tell; what I am thinking, I myself cannot tell; what I am usually saying, is not worth telling. The clock is just striking one, two, three, four, —, —, —, —, —, —, —, —, twelve, forenoon; and here I sit, in the attic story, *alias* the garret, with a friend on the right hand of my standish—a friend whose kindness I shall largely experience at the close of this line—there—thank you—a friend, my dear Mr. Lawrie, whose kindness often makes me blush; a friend who has more of the milk of *human* kindness than all the human race put together, and what is highly to his honor, peculiarly a friend to the friendless as often as they come in his way; in short, Sir, he is, without the least alloy, a universal philanthropist; and his much beloved name is—a bottle of good old Port! In a week, if whim and weather serve, I shall set out for the North—a tour of the Highlands.

I ate some Newhaven broth, in other words, boiled

mussels, with Mr. Farquhar's family, t'other day. Now I see you prick up your ears. They are all well, and Mademoiselle is particularly well. She begs her respects to you all; along with which please present those of your humble servant. I can no more. I have so high a veneration, or rather idolatrisation, for the cleric character, that even a little *futurum esse vel fuisse Priestling*, in his *Penna pennae pennae*, &c., throws an awe over my mind in his presence, and shortens my sentences into single ideas.

Farewell, and believe me to be ever, my dear Sir,
yours,
ROBERT BURNS.

A legal document, dated one day after the foregoing merry letter was penned, still exists, testifying strongly to the poet's inveterate proneness to indulge in "a passion remarkable for the humiliations to which it exposes its victims." It is a writ of discharge to the poet liberating him from the restraints of a caption, or warrant of imprisonment issued against him, as *in meditatione fugæ*, at instance of a young woman who alleged herself to be with child to him. That this document had been preserved and carried about by the poet for some time, is apparent from its condition, and a couple of verses of an old indecent song that are scribbled in pencil by his own hand on the back.

It would be an idle kind of industry were we to attempt to trace out the particular incidents in the misdoings of the bard to which that document relates; the Clarinda correspondence speaks of one "Jenny Clow" in the Grassmarket, who bore him a son; and he himself, in the Thomson correspondence, tells of "a Highland wench in the Cowgate who bare him three bastards at a birth." The next letter tells of similar "donsie tricks" of his apt young pupil, Robert Ainslie. (See on this subject the note to "Robin shure in hairst," page 39, Vol. III.)

(³) TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE, JUNR,
BERRYWELL, DUNSE.

(ALDINE EDITION, 1839.)*

"As I gaed up to Dunse,
To warp a pickle yarn,
Robin, silly body,
He gat me wi' bairn."

FROM henceforth, my dear Sir, I am determined to set off with my letters like the periodical Writers; viz., prefix a kind of text quoted from some Classic of undoubted Authority, such as the Author of the immortal piece, of which my text is a part. What I have to say on my text is exhausted in a letter I wrote you the other day, before I had the pleasure of receiving yours from Inverleithen; and sure never was anything more lucky, as I have but the time to write this, that Mr. Nicol on the opposite side of the table, takes to correct a proof-sheet of a thesis. They are gabbling Latin so loud that I cannot hear what my own soul is saying in my own scull, so must just give you a matter-of-fact sentence or two, and end, if time permit, with a verse *de rei generatione*.

To-morrow I leave Edin^h. in a chaise; Nicol thinks it more comfortable than horseback, to which I say, Amen; so Jenny Geddes goes home to Ayrshire, to use a phrase of my mother's, "wi' her finger in her mouth."

Now for a modest verse of classical authority:—

The cats like kitchen;
The dogs like broo;
The lasses like the lads weel,
And th' auld wives too.
Chorus—An' we're a' noddin,
Nid, nid, noddin,
We're a' noddin fou at e'en.

* The original MS. of this letter is now in the South Kensington Museum, London.

If this does not please you, let me hear from you : if you write any time before the first of September, direct to Inverness, to be left at the Post Office till called for ; the next week at Aberdeen, the next at Edin^h. The sheet is done, and I shall just conclude with assuring you that I am, and ever with pride shall be, My dear Sir,

ROBT. BURNS.

Call your boy what you think proper, only interject BURNS. What say you to a scripture name ; for instance, Zimri Burns Ainslie, or Achitophel, &c., &c. ; look your Bible for these two heroes. If you do this, I will repay the Compliment.

EDIN^H. 23rd August 1787.

(1) TO ST. JAMES'S LODGE, TARBOLTON.

(DR. WADDELL'S ED., 1869.)

EDINBURGH, 23rd August 1787.

MEN AND BRETHREN.—I am truly sorry it is not in my power to be at your quarterly meeting. If I must be absent in body, believe me I shall be present in spirit. I suppose those who owe us monies, by bill or otherwise, will appear—I mean those we summoned. If you please, I wish you would delay prosecuting defaulters till I come home. The court is up, and I will be home before it sits down. In the meantime, to take a note of who appear and who do not, of our faulty debtors, will be right in my humble opinion ; and those who confess debt and crave days, I think we should spare them. Farewell !

Within your dear mansion may wayward Contention,
And withered Envy ne'er enter ;
May Secrecy round be the mystical bound,
And Brotherly Love be the centre.

ROBT. BURNS.

TO THE FREE MASONS OF ST. JAMES'S LODGE,
Care of H. MANSON, TARBOLTON.

THE HIGHLAND TOUR.

THE earliest trace of the poet's personal memoranda of this tour which we can find, is in his *Life* by Lockhart, 1828. Dr. Currie makes no reference to the *Journal*, and merely directs the reader to a letter in the correspondence addressed to Gilbert by his brother, on the day after returning to Edinburgh, giving a general outline of the journey. That biographer also gives a letter from Mr. Josiah Walker of Perth, containing a few particulars of the visit to Blair Athole; followed by some information, sent by Dr. Couper of Fochabers, about the visit to Gordon Castle.

Lockhart thus introduces his extracts from the poet's own record of his progress through the Highlands:—"Some fragments of his *Journal* have recently been discovered, and are now in my hands; so that I may hope to add some interesting particulars to the account of Dr. Currie. The travellers hired a post-chaise for their expedition—the High School Master being probably no very skilful equestrian." The portions printed by Mr. Lockhart correspond with the *Journal*, as afterwards published more fully by Cunningham, whose version has, since 1834, been frequently printed. Although unable to ascertain where that manuscript now is, Mr. Douglas had the good fortune to fall in with the identical note book carried by Burns, and used as a scroll-record of this Tour. An inspection of it proved that the manuscript referred to by Lockhart must have been an extended transcript from this rough original. The latter interesting relic of the bard is the property of James T. Gibson Craig, Esq., who submitted it to Mr. Douglas, for use in his Edition. He was thus enabled to introduce a few happy variations, and to fill up some blanks that occur in the record as commonly printed. We give the *Journal* as it appears in Mr. Douglas's Edition.

EDINBURGH, 25th Aug. 1787.

[*Saturday*] I set out for the north in company with my good friend Mr. N—. From Corstorphine, by Kirkliston and Winchburgh, fine, improven, fertile country: near Linlithgow the lands worse, light and sandy. LINLITHGOW, the appearance of rude, decayed, idle grandeur, charmingly rural, retired situation. The

old rough palace a tolerably fine but melancholy ruin—sweetly situated on a small elevation by the brink of a loch. Shown the room where the beautiful, injured Mary Queen of Scots was born—A pretty good old Gothic church—the infamous stool of repentance standing, in the old Romish way, in a lofty situation. What a poor, pimping business is a Presbyterian place of worship! dirty, narrow, squalid; stuck in a corner of old popish grandeur such as Linlithgow, and much more Melrose. Ceremony and show, if judiciously thrown in, absolutely necessary for the bulk of mankind, both in religious and civil matters.

West Lothian.—The more elegance and luxury among the farmers, I always observe, in equal proportions, the rudeness and stupidity of the peasantry. This remark I have made all over the Lothians, Merse, Roxburgh, &c.; and for this, among other reasons, I think that a man of romantic taste, a “man of feeling,” will be better pleased with the poverty, but intelligent minds of the peasantry in Ayrshire, (peasantry they are all below the Justice of Peace) than the opulence of a club of Merse farmers, when he at the same time considers the Vandalism of *their* plough-folks, &c. I carry this idea so far, that an uninclosed, half-improven country is to me actually more agreeable, and gives me more pleasure as a prospect, than a country cultivated like a garden.*

Dine.—Go to my friend Mr. Smith’s at Avon Printfield—find nobody but Mrs. Miller, an agreeable, sensible, modest, good body; as useful, but not so ornamental as Fielding’s Miss Western—not rigidly polite à la Française, but easy, hospitable, and housewifely.

An old lady from Paisley, a Mrs. Dawson, whom I promise to call for in Paisley—like old Lady Wau-

* “It is hardly to be expected that Robert Burns should have estimated the wealth of nations entirely on the principles of a political economist.”—LOCKHART.

chope, and still more like Mrs. C——, her conversation is pregnant with strong sense and just remark, but, like them, a certain air of self-importance and a *duresse* in the eye, seem to indicate, as the Ayrshire wife observed of her cow, that "she had a mind o' her ain." *

Pleasant distant view of Dunfermline and the rest of the fertile coast of Fife as we go down to that dirty, ugly place, Borrowstouness. See a horse-race and call on a friend of Mr. Nicol's, a Bailie Cowan, of whom I know too little to attempt his portrait. Come through the rich carse of Falkirk to Falkirk to pass the night.

[*Sunday, 26th Aug.*] Falkirk nothing remarkable except the tomb of Sir John the Graham, over which, in the succession of time, four stones have been laid.—Camelon, the ancient metropolis of the Picts, now a small village, in the neighborhood of Falkirk.—Cross the grand canal to Carron. Breakfast—come past Larbert and admire a fine monument of cast-iron erected by Mr. Bruce, the African traveller, to his wife. *N. B.*—He used her very ill, and I suppose he meant it as much out of gratitude to Heaven, as anything else. †

Pass Dunipace, a place laid out with fine taste—a charming amphitheatre bounded by Denny village, and pleasant seats of Herbertshire, Denovan, and down to Dunipace. The Carron running down the bosom of the whole makes it one of the most charming little prospects I have seen.

Dine at Auchenbowie—Mr. Monro an excellent, worthy old man—Miss Monro an amiable, sensible,

* By "Lady Wauchope," is meant Mrs. Scott of Wauchope, referred to in the poet's *Border Tour*, page 293. "Mrs. C——" may have been Mrs. Cockburn of Crichton Street, Edinburgh.

† Bruce's second wife, Mary, eldest daughter of Thos. Dundas, Esq., of Carron-hall, whom he married 20th May 1776; he had three children by her, and she died in 1784. James Bruce of Kinnaird died 27th April 1794.

sweet young woman, much resembling Mrs. Grierson.* Come to Bannockburn—shewn the old house where James III. was murdered. The field of Bannockburn—the hole where glorious Bruce set his standard. Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant, heroic countrymen coming o'er the hill, and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers; noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, blood-thirsty foe. I see them meet in gloriously triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence.—Come to Stirling.

(⁶) TO MR. ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

STIRLING, 26th August, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,—I intended to have written you from Edinburgh, and now write you from Stirling to make an excuse. Here am I, on my way to Inverness, with a truly original, but very worthy man, a Mr. Nicol, one of the masters of the High School in Edinburgh. I left Auld Reekie yesterday morning, and have passed, besides by-excursions, Linlithgow, Borrowstouness, Falkirk, and here am I undoubtedly. This morning I knelt at the tomb of Sir John the Graham, the gallant friend of the immortal Wallace; and two hours ago I said a fervent prayer for Old Caledonia, over the hole in a blue whinstone, where Robert de Bruce fixed his royal standard on the banks of Bannockburn; and just now, from Stirling Castle,

* The wife of George Grierson, Glasgow.

I have seen by the setting sun the glorious prospect of the windings of Forth through the rich carse of Stirling, and skirting the equally rich carse of Falkirk. The crops are very strong, but so very late, that there is no harvest, except a ridge or two perhaps in ten miles, all the way I have travelled from Edinburgh.

I left Andrew Bruce* and family all well. I will be at least three weeks in making my tour, as I shall return by coast, and have many people to call for.

My best compliments to Charles† our dear kinsman and fellow-saint; and Messrs. W. and H. Parkers. I hope Hughoc‡ is going on and prospering with God and Miss M'Causlin.

If I could think on anything sprightly, I should let you hear every other post; but a dull, matter-of-fact business, like this scrawl, the less and seldomer one writes the better.

Among other matters of fact I shall add this, that I am and ever shall be, my dear Sir,—Your obliged,

ROBT. BURNS.

[*Monday, 27th August.*] Go to Harvieston—Mrs. Hamilton and family—Mrs. Chalmers—Mrs. Shields—Go to see Cauldron linn, and Rumbling-brig, and the Deil's mill. Return in the evening to Stirling.

Supper—Messrs. Doig (the Schoolmaster) and Bell; Captain Forrester of the Castle—Doig a queerish figure, and something of a pedant—Bell a joyous, vacant fellow who sings a good song—Forrester a merry, swearing kind of a man, with a dash of the Sodger.

* Andrew Bruce, a shopkeeper on the North Bridge, Edinburgh, to whom the poet directed his letters to be addressed, appears to have been originally from Kilmarnock.

† Charles Samson, a brother of the celebrated "Tam."

‡ Mr. Hugh Parker, then in terms of courtship with the lady mentioned.

(4) TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ., MAUCHLINE.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

STIRLING, 28th August, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,—Here am I on my way to Inverness. I have rambled over the rich fertile carses of Falkirk and Stirling, and am delighted with their appearance : richly waving crops of wheat, barley, &c., but no harvest at all yet, except, in one or two places, an old wife's ridge. Yesterday morning I rode from this town up the meandering Devon's banks to pay my respects to some Ayrshire folks at Harvieston. After breakfast we made a party to go and see the famous Caudron-linn, a remarkable cascade in the Devon, about five miles above Harvieston ; and after spending one of the most pleasant days I ever had in my life, I returned to Stirling in the evening. They are a family, Sir, though I had not had any prior tie—though they had not been the brothers and sisters of a certain generous friend of mine—I would never forget them. I am told you have not seen them these several years, so you can have very little idea of what these young folks are now. Your brother* is as tall as you are, but slender rather than otherwise ; and I have the satisfaction to inform you that he is getting the better of those consumptive symptoms which I suppose you know were threatening him. His make, and particularly his manner, resemble you, but he will have a still finer face. (I put in the word *still*, to please Mrs. Hamilton.) Good sense, modesty, and at

* "Step-brother" is here meant. Mr. John Hamilton, father of the poet's friend and patron, Gavin Hamilton, was twice married ; his second wife (now a widow) was one of three sisters, namely, the deceased Mrs. Tait of Harvieston, Mrs. Chalmers (also a widow, the mother of Lady M'Kenzie and Miss Margaret Chalmers), and herself, the mother of Charlotte and other children, who resided at Harvieston, by way of keeping house for Mr. Tait.

the same time a just idea of that respect that man owes to man, and has a right in his turn to exact, are striking features in his character; and, what with me is the Alpha and Omega, he has a heart that might adorn the breast of a poet! Grace has a good figure, and the look of health and cheerfulness, but nothing else remarkable in her person. I scarcely ever saw so striking a likeness as is between her and your little Beenie; the mouth and chin particularly. She is reserved at first; but as we grew better acquainted, I was delighted with the native frankness of her manner, and the sterling sense of her observation. Of Charlotte I cannot speak in common terms of admiration; she is not only beautiful but lovely. Her form is elegant; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's. After the exercise of our riding to the Falls, Charlotte was exactly Dr. Donne's mistress:—

—— “ Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one would almost say her body thought.”

Her eyes are fascinating; at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind.

I do not give you all this account, my good Sir, to flatter you. I mean it to reproach you. Such relations the first peer in the realm might own with pride; then why do you not keep up more correspondence with these so amiable young folks? I had a thousand questions to answer about you. I had to describe the little ones with the minuteness of anatomy. They were highly delighted when I told them that John*

* The “wee curlic Johnnie” of the *Dedication to G. H.*

was so good a boy, and so fine a scholar, and that Willie* was going on still very pretty; but I have it on commission to tell her from them that beauty is a poor silly bauble, without she be good. Miss Chalmers I had left in Edinburgh, but I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Chalmers, only Lady Mackenzie being rather a little alarmingly ill of a sore throat somewhat marred our enjoyment.

I shall not be in Ayrshire for four weeks. My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Kennedy, and Doctor Mackenzie. I shall probably write him from some stage or other. I am ever, Sir,—
Yours most gratefully,

ROBT. BURNS.

Tuesday morning, [28th Aug.] Breakfast with Captain Forrester—leave Stirling—Ochil Hills—Devon River—Forth and Teith—Allan River—Strathallan, a fine country but little improv'd—Ardoch Camp—Cross Earn to Crieff—Dine, and go to Arbruchil; cold reception at Arbruchil—A most romantically pleasant ride up Earn, by Auchertyre and Comrie—Sup at Crieff.

Wednesday Morning, [29th Aug.] Leave Crieff—Glen Almond—Almond River—Ossian's Grave—Loch Frioch—Glenquaich—Landlord and landlady remarkable characters—Taymouth—described in rhyme—Meet the Hon. Charles Townshend.

Thursday, [30th Aug.] Come down Tay to Dunkeld—Glenlyon House—Lyon River—Druid's Temple—three circles of stones, the outermost sunk; the second has thirteen stones remaining; the innermost has eight; two large detached ones like a gate, to the south-east—Say prayers in it—Pass Tay Bridge—Aber-

* Miss Wilhelmina, then nine years old, married, on 3rd March 1806, the Rev. John Tod of Mauchline, successor to "Daddie Auld." In the announcement she is styled "Miss W. Kennedy Hamilton, daughter of the late Gavin Hamilton, Esq." Mrs. Tod died in March 1858.

feldy—described in rhyme—Castle Menzies, beyond Grandtully—Balleighan—Logierait—Inver—Dr. Stewart—Sup.

Friday, [31st Aug.] Walk with Mrs. Stewart and Beard to Birnam top—fine prospect down Tay—Craigiebarns Hills—Hermitage on the Bran Water, with a picture of Ossian—Breakfast with Dr. Stewart—Neil Gow plays; a short, stout-built Highland figure, with his greyish eyes shed on his honest social brow—an interesting face, marking strong sense, kind open-heartedness, mixed with unmistrusting simplicity—visit his house—Margaret Gow. Ride up Tummel River to Blair. Fascally, a beautiful, romantic nest—wild grandeur of the pass of Gillikrankie—visit the gallant Lord Dundee's stone. Blair—Sup with the Duchess—easy and happy from the manners of that family—confirmed in my good opinion of my friend Walker.

Excerpt from a letter addressed to Mr. Alex. Cunningham by Mr. Josiah Walker, dated Perth, 24th Oct. 1797.—“On reaching Blair, Burns sent me notice of his arrival, and I hastened to meet him at the inn. The Duke, to whom he brought a letter of introduction, was from home; but the Duchess, being informed of his arrival, gave him an invitation to sup and sleep at Athole House. He accepted the invitation, but as the hour of supper was at some distance, begged I would, in the interval, be his guide through the grounds. It was already growing dark; yet the softened, though faint and uncertain view of their beauties, which the moonlight afforded us, seemed exactly suited to the state of his feelings at the time. I had often, like others, experienced the pleasures which arise from the sublime or elegant landscape, but I never saw those feelings so intense as in Burns. When we reached a rustic hut on the river Tilt, where it is overhung by a woody precipice, from which there is a noble waterfall, he threw himself on the heathy seat, and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination. I cannot help thinking it might have been here that he conceived the idea of the following lines, which he afterwards introduced into his poem on *Bruar Water*, when

only fancying such a combination of objects as were now present to his eye—

“Or, by the reaper’s nightly beam,
Mild, chequering thro’ the trees,
Rave to my darkly-dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.”

It was with much difficulty I prevailed on him to quit this spot, and to be introduced in proper time to supper.

“My curiosity was great to see how he would conduct himself in company so different from what he had been accustomed to. His manner was unembarrassed, plain and firm. He appeared to have complete reliance on his own native good sense for directing his behavior. He seemed at once to perceive and to appreciate what was due to the company and to himself, and never to forget a proper respect for the separate species of dignity belonging to each. He did not arrogate conversation, but when led to it, he spoke with ease, propriety, and manliness. He tried to exert his abilities, because he knew it was ability alone gave him a title to be there. The Duke’s fine young family attracted much of his admiration; he drank their healths as ‘honest men and bonie lasses,’ an idea which was much applauded by the company, and with which he has very felicitously closed the poem alluded to.

“Next day [Saturday, 1st Sep.] I took a ride with him through some of the most romantic parts of that neighborhood, and was highly gratified by his conversation. As a specimen of his happiness of conception and strength of expression, I will mention a remark which he made on his fellow-traveller, who was engaged in fishing at the time, a few paces from us.* He was a man of robust but clumsy person; and while Burns was expressing to me the value he entertained for him, on account of his vigorous talents, although they were clouded at times by coarseness of manners; ‘in short,’ he added, ‘his mind is like his body, he has a con-founded strong in-knee’d sort of a soul.’

“Much attention was paid to Burns both before and after the Duke’s return, of which he was perfectly sensible, without being vain; and at his departure I recommended to him, as

* The writer of this letter afterwards produced a Memoir of Burns, in which he explains how deftly he had managed to separate Nicol from Burns without offence, during the visit to Blair. This was accomplished by furnishing the schoolmaster with a rod and tackle, and engrossing his attention with fishing—a sport which he was very partial to.

the most appropriate return he could make, to write some descriptive verses on any of the scenes with which he had been so much delighted. After leaving Blair, he, by the Duke's advice, visited the *Falls of Bruar*, and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness in which he inclosed the poem on '*Bruar Water.*' "']

Saturday, [1st Sept.] Visit the scenes round Blair—fine, but spoilt with bad taste—Tilt and Garrie rivers—Falls on the Tilt—Heather seat—Ride in company with Sir William Murray and Mr. Walker, to Loch Tummel—meanderings of the Rannoch, which runs thro' *quondam* Struan Robertson's estate from Loch Rannoch to Loch Tummel—Dine at Blair—Company—General Murray, Orien. Capt. Murray, an honest Tar; Sir William Murray, an honest, worthy man, but tormented with the hypochondria; Mrs. Graham, *belle et amiable*; Miss Cathcart; Mrs. Murray, a painter; Mrs. King; Duchess and fine family, the Marquis, Lords James, Edward, and Robert; Ladies Charlotte, Emelia, and children—Dance—Sup—Duke; Mr. Graham of Fintray; Mr. M'Laggan; Mr. and Mrs. Stewart.*

Sunday, [2d Sep.] Come up the Garrie—Falls of Bruar—Allecairoch—Dalwhinnie—Dine—Snow on the hills, 17 feet deep; no corn from Loch Gairie to Dalwhinnie—cross the Spey, and come down the stream to Pitnim—Straths rich; *les environs* picturesque—Craigow hill—Ruthven of Badenoch—Barrack; wild and magnificent. Rothemurche (Rothiemurchus) on the other side, and Glenmore—Grant of Rothemurche's poetry—told me by the Duke of Gordon; Strathspeys rich and romantic.

* It seems evident that the poet and Nicol started from Athole House after breakfast on Sunday morning. It also appears that Burns had carried with him his Autobiographical letter to Moore, and favored the Duchess with a reading of it. We learn this fact from Mr. Walker's letter to Burns of 13th Sept. 1787: "The Duchess would give any consideration for another sight of your letter to Dr. Moore."

Monday, [3d Sep.] Breakfast at Aviemore, a wild romantic spot—Snows in patches on the hills 18 feet deep—Enter Strathspey—come to Sir James Grant's—dine—company—Lady Grant a sweet pleasant body—Mr. and Miss Bailie; Mrs. Bailie; Dr. and Mrs. Grant—Clergymen—Mr. Hepburn—come through mist and darkness to Dulsie to lie.

Tuesday, [4th Sep.] Findhorn river—rocky banks—come on to Castle Cawdor where Macbeth murdered King Duncan—saw the bed in which King Duncan was stabbed—dine at Kilraik, Mrs. Rose, senr., a true chieftain's wife, a daughter of Clephane—Mrs. Rose, junr.—Fort George—Inverness.

(6) TO MR. JAMES BURNES, WRITER,
MONTROSE.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

DR. COUSIN,—I wrote you from Edin^r. that I intended being north. I shall be in Stonhive* sometime on Monday the 10th inst., and I beg the favor of you to meet me there. I understand there is but one Inn at Stonhive, so you cannot miss me. As I am in the country I certainly shall see any of my father's relations that are any way near my road; but I do not even know their names, or where one of them lives, so I hope you will meet me and be my guide. Farewell! till I have the pleasure of meeting you.—I am ever, d^r. Sir, yours.

ROBT. BURNS.†

INVERNESS, 4th Sept. 1787.

* Stonehive is the local name for Stonehaven, the county town of Kincardineshire, and some 12 miles south of Edinburgh on the road to Montrose.—J. H.

† The original letter is in the Poet's Monument at Edinburgh, and Mr. Burnes has appended the following note below:—"The signature of this letter cut off and presented to Robt. Caddell, Esq., Bookseller, Edinburgh, 18th Dec. 1829.—J. B."

(1) TO WILLIAM INGLIS, ESQ., INVERNESS.

(DR. HATELY WADDELL'S ED.)

MR. BURNS presents his most respectful compliments to Mr. Inglis—would have waited on him with the inclosed,* but is jaded to death with the fatigue of to-day's journey—won't leave Inverness till Thursday morning.

ETTLER HOTEL, *Tuesday Evening.*

Wednesday, [5th Sep.] Loch Ness—Braes of Ness—General's hut—Fall of Fyers—Urquhart Castle and Strath. Dine at ———, Sup at Mr. Inglis's—Mr. Inglis and Mrs. Inglis : three young ladies.

(1) TO MR. WALKER BLAIR OF ATHOLE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

INVERNESS, *5th Sept. 1787.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have just time to write the foregoing,† and to tell you that it was (at least most part of it) the effusion of an half-hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was *extempore*, for I have

* The enclosure was a letter of introduction to that gentleman (then Provost of Inverness) from the poet's friend, William Dunbar, Esq., W.S. "Colonel of the Crochallan Club" in the following terms:—"Dear Sir,—The gentleman by whom this will be delivered to you is Mr. Burns of Airshire, who goes on an excursion to the North, personally unacquainted, excepting in so far as his elegant and simple Poems may have caught your attention. To men of such liberal and disinterested feelings as I know the citizens of Inverness to be, little seemed necessary as commendatory of the Bard of Nature. Yet I thought it unworthy of me to permit him to migrate without mentioning him to you as my friend, and consigning him to you for that civility which distinguishes you among all ranks of *migrants*. I offer my best respects to Mrs. Inglis, and am always, dear Sir, your most obed^t. serv^t."

WILLIAM DUNBAR."

"EDIN., *24th Aug. 1787.*"

† The poem, afterwards published as "The humble Petition of Bruar Water to the noble Duke of Athole." See p. III, *supra*.

endeavored to brush it up as well as Mr. N—'s chat, and the jogging of the chaise would allow. It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honor or gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athole, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God in my hour of need! I shall never forget.

The "little angel-band!" I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Fyers. I shall never forget the fine family piece I saw at Blair: the amiable, the truly noble Duchess, with her smiling little seraph in her lap, at the head of the table: the lovely "olive plants," as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother: the beautiful Mrs. Grahame; the lovely, sweet Miss Cathcart, &c. I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice!* My Lord Duke's kind hospitality—markedly kind indeed. Mr. Graham of Fintray's charms of conversation: Sir W. Murray's friendship: in short, the recollection of all that polite, agreeable company, raises an honest glow in my bosom.

R. B.

Thursday [6th Sep.] Come over Culloden muir—reflections on the field of battle—breakfast at Kilraick†—old Mrs. Rose, sterling sense, warm heart, strong passion, honest pride, all in an uncommon degree—Mrs. Rose jun., a little milder than the mother; this perhaps owing to her being younger—Mr. Grant, minister at Calder, resembles Mr. Scott at Inverleithen

*The Mrs. Grahame and Miss Cathcart whom the poet thus eulogises were daughters of Lord Cathcart, and sisters of the Duchess of Athole. The whole of these three fair sisters predeceased even our too short-lived poet. The portrait of Mrs. Grahame by Gainsborough, is now the admired specimen of that artist's work which adorns the walls of the Royal Scottish Academy at Edinburgh. Her husband, Thomas Grahame of Balgowan, distinguished himself as commander of the British troops at Barossa, and was raised to the peerage by the style of Lord Lynedoch. He survived till 1843, aged 94.

† This is the local diminutive of *Kilravock*, Inverness-shire.

—Mrs. Rose and Mr. Grant accompany us to Kildrummie—two young ladies, Miss Ross, who sang two Gaelic songs, beautiful and lovely; Miss Sophie Brodie, not very beautiful, but most agreeable and amiable—both of them the gentlest, mildest, sweetest creatures on earth, and happiness be with them!

Dine at Nairn—fall in with a pleasant enough gentleman, Dr. Stewart, who had been long abroad with his father in the *Forty-five*; and Mr. Falconer, a spare, irascible, warm-hearted Norland, and a non-juror—wastes of sand—Brodie House to lie. Mr. Brodie truly polite, but not just the Highland cordiality.

Friday [7th Sep.] Cross the Findhorn to Forres—Mr. Brodie tells me that the muir where Shakespeare lays Macbeth's witch-meeting is still so haunted, that the country folks won't pass it by night. Elgin to breakfast; meet with Mr. —, Mr. Dunbar's friend, a pleasant sort of a man; can come no nearer. Venerable ruins of Elgin Abbey—A grander effect at first glance than Melrose, but nothing near so beautiful.

Cross Spey to Fochabers—fine palace, worthy of the generous proprietor—dine—company—Duke and Duchess, Ladies Charlotte and Madeline;* Colonel Abercrombie and Lady; Mr. Gordon, and Mr. —, a clergyman, a venerable, aged figure, and Mr. Hoy, a clergyman, I suppose, a pleasant open manner. The Duke makes me happier than ever great man did—noble, princely; yet mild, condescending and affable, gay, and kind. The Duchess charming, witty, and sensible—God bless them!†

* Lady Charlotte, then nineteen years old, afterwards became Duchess of Richmond. Lady Madeline married Sir Robert Sinclair of Murkle.

† Burns had been introduced to the Duchess of Gordon during the preceding winter; and presuming on this acquaintance, he proceeded to Gordon Castle, leaving Mr. Nicol at the Inn of Fochabers. At the castle he was received with the utmost hospitality and kindness, and the family being about to sit down to dinner, he was invited to take a place at table. This invitation he accepted; and after partaking a little and drinking a few glasses of wine, he intimated, that as a matter of necessity he must soon withdraw to join his fellow-traveller,

[*Friday night, 7th Sep.*] Sleep at Cullen. Hitherto the country is sadly poor and unimproved; the houses, crops, horses, cattle, &c., all in unison with their cart-wheels; and these are of low, coarse, unshod, clumsy work, with an axle-tree which had been made with other design than to be a resting shaft between the wheels.

[*Saturday, 8th Sep.*] Breakfasted at Banff—Improvements over this part of the country—Portsoy Bay—pleasant ride along the shore—country almost wild again between Banff and Newbyth; quite wild as we come through Buchan to Old Deer; but near the village both lands and crops rich—lie.

[*Sunday, 9th Sep.*] Set out for Peterhead. Near Peterhead come along the shore by the famous Bullars of Buchan, and Blain's Castle. The soil rich; crops of wheat, turnips, &c.; but no inclosing: soil rather light. Come to Ellon and dine—Lord Aberdeen's seat: entrance denied to everybody owing to the jealousy of threescore over a kept country-wench. Soil and improvements as before, till [*Sunday night*] we come to Aberdeen to lie.

[*Monday, 10th Sep.*] Meet with Mr. Chalmers, printer, a facetious fellow; Mr. Ross, a fine fellow, like Professor Tytler; Mr. Marshall, one of the *poetæ*

His noble host offered to send a servant to conduct Mr. Nicol to the castle, but Burns insisted on undertaking that office himself. A gentleman from the castle was sent on the part of the Duke, who delivered the invitation to Mr. Nicol in all the forms of politeness. The invitation came too late; the pride of the Schoolmaster had already been inflamed to a high pitch under the imagined neglect: he had ordered the horses to be put in the chaise, being determined to proceed on his journey alone; and they found him parading before the door of the inn venting his anger on the postilion for his slowness in executing his commands. Burns therefore seated himself beside Nicol in the post chaise, and turned his back on Castle Gordon, with mortification and regret. He afterwards wrote to Mr. Hoy, the Duke's librarian, in these terms:—"I shall certainly, among my legacies, leave my latest curse to that unlucky predicament which hurried—tore me away from Castle Gordon. May that obstinate son of Latin prose be curst to Scotch-mile periods, and damned to seven-league paragraphs; while Declension and Conjugation, Gender, Number, and Tense, under the ragged banners of Dissonance and Disarrangement, eternally rank against him in hostile array."

minores. Mr. Sheriffs, author of "Jamie and Bess," a little decrepid body, with some abilities. Bishop Skinner, a non-juror, son of the author of "Tullochgorum," a man whose mild venerable manner is the most marked of any in so young a man—Professor Gordon, a good-natured, jolly-looking professor—Aberdeen, a lazy town—near Stonehive, the coast a good deal romantic. Meet my relations.* Robert Burnes, Writer in Stonehive,† one of those who love fun, a gill, a punning joke, and have not a bad heart—his wife a sweet hospitable body, without any affectation of what is called town-breeding.

[*Tuesday, 11th Sep.*] Breakfast with Mr. Burnes—lie at Laurencekirk—Album—Library—Mrs. —, a jolly, frank, sensible, love-inspiring widow—Howe of the Mearns, a rich, cultivated, but still uninclosed, country.

[*Wednesday, 12th Sep.*] Cross North Esk river and a rich country, to Craigow. Go to Montrose, that finely-situated handsome town.

[*Thursday, 13th Sep.*] Leave Montrose—breakfast at Auchmuthie, and sail along that wild rocky coast and see the famous caverns, particularly the Gariepot.

(7) TO MR. JAMES BURNES, WRITER,
MONTROSE.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

TOWNFIELD, *six o'clock morning.*

MY DEAR COUSIN,—Mr. Nicol and Mr. Carnegie have taken some freak in their head, and have wakened me

* Here, by appointment, his cousin and correspondent, Mr. James Burnes, joined him from Montrose.

† This "Robert Burnes," seems to have been an elder brother of John Burnes, the author of "Thrummy Cap," who was then a lad of sixteen.

just now with the rattling of the chaise to carry me to meet them at Craigie to go on our journey some other road, and breakfast by the way. I must go, which makes me very sorry. I beg my kindest, best compliments to your wife and all the good friends I saw yesternight. Write me to Edin^r. in this week, with a direction for your nephew in Glasgow. Direct to me—care of Mr. Creech, Edin^r.—I am ever, my dear Cousin,—Yours truly,

ROB^t. BURNS.

[MONTROSE, 13th Sep.]*

[*Thursday.*] Land, and dine at Arbroath—stately ruins of Arbroath Abbey—come to Dundee through a fertile country. Dundee, a low-lying but pleasant town—old steeple—Tayfirth—Broughty Castle, a finely situated ruin, jutting into the Tay.

[*Friday, 14th Sep.*] Breakfast with the Miss Scotts—Mr. Mitchell, an honest clergyman—Mr. Bruce another, but pleasant, agreeable and engaging; the first from Aberlemno, the second from Forfar. Dine with Mr. Anderson, a brother-in-law of Miss Scotts. Miss Bess Scott like Mrs. Greenfield—my bardship almost in love with her. Come through the rich harvests and fine hedge-rows of the carse of Gowrie, along the romantic margin of the Grampian Hills, to Perth—Castle Huntley—Sir Stewart Thriepland.

[*Saturday, 15th Sep.*] Perth—Scoon—picture of the Chevalier and his sister; Queen Mary's bed, the hangings wrought with her own hands—Fine, fruitful, hilly, woody country round Perth. Taybridge. Mr. and Mrs. Hastings—Major Scott—Castle Gowrie.

Leave Perth—come to Strathearn to Endermay to dine. Fine fruitful, cultivated strath—the scene of “Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,” near Perth—fine scenery

* The original MS. is in the poet's Monument at Edinburgh. The date at bottom is in the handwriting of Mr. Burness.

on the banks of the May—Mrs. Belches, gawcie, frank, affable, fond of rural sports, hunting, &c. Mrs. Stirling, her sister, *en verite*. Come to Kinross to lie—reflections in a fit of the colic.

[*Sunday, 16th Sep.*] Come through a cold, barren country to Queensferry—dine—cross the ferry and come to Edinburgh.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS, MOSSGIEL.

EDINBURGH, 17th Sept. 1787.

MY DEAR SIR.*—I arrived here safe yesterday evening, after a tour of twenty-two days, and travelling near 600 miles, windings included. My farthest stretch was about ten miles beyond Inverness. I went thro' the heart of the Highlands by Crieff, Taymouth, the famous seat of Lord Breadalbane, down the Tay, among cascades and Druidical circle of stones, to Dunkeld, a seat of the Duke of Athole; thence across Tay, and up one of his tributary streams to Blair of Athole, another of the Duke's seats, where I had the honor of spending nearly two days† with his Grace and family: thence many miles through a wild country, among cliffs grey with eternal snows, and gloomy savage glens, till I crossed the Spey and went down the stream through Strathspey, so famous in Scottish music; Badenoch, &c. till I reached Grant Castle, where I spent half a day with Sir James Grant and family; and then crossed the country for Fort-George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of Macbeth; there I saw the identical bed in which tradition says King Duncan was murdered; lastly, from Fort-George to Inverness.

* This may appear a singular term for the poet to employ, in addressing his brother, but so it is in the MS.

† Part of Friday and whole of Saturday (Aug. 31, and Sep. 1.)

I returned by the coast, through Nairn, Forres, and so on, to Aberdeen, thence to Stonehive, where James Burness, from Montrose, met me by appointment. I spent two days among our relations, and found our aunts, Jean and Isabel, still alive, and hale old women.* John Caird, though born the same year with our father, walks as vigorously as I can: they have had several letters from his son in New York. William Brand is likewise a stout old fellow; but further particulars I delay till I see you, which will be in two or three weeks. The rest of my stages are not worth rehearsing; warm as I was from Ossian's country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing-towns or fertile carses? I slept at the famous Brodie of Brodie's one night, and dined at Gordon Castle next day, with the Duke, Duchess, and family. I am thinking to cause my old mare to meet me, by means of John Ronald, at Glasgow; but you shall hear farther from me before I leave Edinburgh. My duty and many compliments from the north to my mother; and my brotherly compliments to the rest. I have been trying for a berth for William, but am not likely to be successful.—Farewell.

R. B.

(⁸) TO MR. JAMES BURNES, WRITER,
MONTROSE.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

MY DEAR SIR,—I send you, along with this, nine copies† which you will transmit as marked on the blank leaves. The one to Lord Gardenstone you will transmit as soon as possible. Your hints about young Hudson I shall carefully remember when I call for him.

* See the Table at page 331, Vol. I.

† Of his printed Poems.

Any thing you send me, direct to the care of Mr. Andrew Bruce, Merch^t., Bridge Street, Edin., but I am afraid that your kind offer of the dry fish will cost more than they are worth to carriers. My compliments to your wife and all friends, and excuse this brevity in,—Yours ever,

ROBT. BURNS.*

EDIN., 19th Sep. 1787.

On 23d September the poet dispatched to Dr. Moore his celebrated Autobiographical letter. See Vol. I, p. 332. It had been, as he explains, “unluckily forgot among other papers at Glasgow” on his way to Edinburgh, and was not recovered till his return from the great Highland Tour. About the same time, Burns received, by the hands of Dr. Blacklock, a letter from Mr. Josiah Walker, dated 13th September, in which he says,—“I still think with vexation on that ill-timed indisposition which lost me a day’s enjoyment of a man possessed of those very dispositions and talents I most admire. . . . You know how anxious the Duke was to have another day of you, and to let Mr. Dundas have the pleasure of your conversation as the best dainty with which he could entertain an honored guest. . . . The Duchess would give any consideration for another sight of your letter to Dr. Moore; we must fall upon some method of procuring it for her.”

Thus we see that Burns, by the excuse, real or pretended, of indisposition, broke away from Athole House on the Sunday morning. We fear that the temper of Nicol had something to do in that matter, as he could not well be employed in his angling sport on that day, and Burns might be afraid to risk his companion *in doors*. The poet very happily compared himself during that excursion to “a man travelling with a loaded blunderbuss at full cock.”

* The original MS. is preserved in the Poet’s Monument at Edinburgh. Mr. Burness has appended the following note:—“The signature cut out by Mr. Burness and presented to the Hon. W^m. Maule of Panmure, 1821.”

(¹) TO PATRICK MILLER, ESQ., DALSWINTON.

(CHAMBERS' ED., 1852.)

EDINBURGH, 28th September, 1787.

SIR,—I have been on a tour through the Highlands, and arrived in town but the other day, so could not wait on you at Dalswinton about the latter end of August, as I had promised and intended.

Independent of any views of future connections, what I owe you for the past, as a friend and benefactor (when friends I had few, and benefactors I had none), strongly in my bosom prohibits the most distant instance of ungrateful disrespect. I am informed you do not come to town for a month still, and within that time I shall certainly wait on you, as by this time I suppose you will have settled your scheme with respect to your farms.

My journey through the Highlands was perfectly inspiring, and I hope I have laid in a good stock of new poetical ideas from it. I shall make no apology for sending you the enclosed: it is a small but grateful tribute to the memory of our common countryman.*—I have the honor to be, with the most grateful sincerity, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

P.S.—I have added another poem, partly as it alludes to some folks nearly and dearly connected with Ayrshire, and partly as rhymes are the only coin in which the poor poet can pay his debts of gratitude. The lady alluded to is Miss Isabella M'Leod, aunt to the young Countess of Loudon.

As I am determined not to leave Edinburgh till I

* The Elegy on Sir James Hunter Blair. Mr. Miller's family (of Barskimming and Glenlee) belonged to Ayrshire.

wind up my matters with Mr. Creech, which I am afraid will be a tedious business, should I unfortunately miss you at Dalswinton, perhaps your factor will be able to inform me of your intentions with respect to Elesland farm, which will save me a jaunt to Edinburgh again.

There is something so suspicious in the profession of attachment from a little man to a great man, that I know not how to do justice to the grateful warmth of my heart, when I would say how truly I am interested in the welfare of your little troop of angels, and how much I have the honor to be again, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

EXCURSIONS IN OCTOBER 1787.

IN consequence of a slip in the memory of Dr. James M'Kittrick Adair, a young relative of Mrs. Dunlop to whom Burns was introduced in Edinburgh this autumn, great confusion has prevailed among the poet's biographers and annotators in their attempts to chronicle his various wanderings during the summer of 1787. Adair supplied Dr. Currie with a lively enough account of a journey he and Burns had together, specially to visit the conjoined families of Mr. John Tait, W.S., Mrs. Hamilton, and Mrs. Chalmers, at Harvieston; but he made the mistake of stating that the excursion was undertaken "in August 1787." The reader has been already made aware how Burns was engaged between the date of his arrival in Edinburgh on the 7th, and his leaving it in company with Nicol on the 25th of that month. It is evident from Dr. Adair's narrative that Burns had previously visited Harvieston; and it is equally apparent from the terms of the poet's letter to Gavin Hamilton, of 28th August 1787, that he had seen that gentleman's relatives there for the *first* time, on the 27th of that month.

As Dr. Adair's narrative must of necessity form a portion of the Biography of Burns, we here record it with some desirable abridgement:—"We rode by Linlithgow and Carron to Stirling. We visited the iron-works at Carron, with which the poet was forcibly struck. The resemblance between that

place and its inhabitants to the cave of the Cyclops, which must have occurred to every classical reader, presented itself to Burns. At Stirling the prospects from the Castle strongly interested him; his national feelings had, in a former visit, been powerfully excited by the ruinous and roofless state of the hall in which the Scottish Parliaments had frequently been held. His indignation had vented itself in some imprudent, but not unpoetical lines, which had given much offence, and which he took this opportunity of erasing, by breaking the pane of the window at the inn on which they were written.

"From Stirling we went next morning through the romantic and fertile vale of Devon to Harvieston, in Clackmannanshire, then inhabited by Mrs. Hamilton, with the younger part of whose family Burns had been previously acquainted. He introduced me to the family, and then was formed my first acquaintance with Mrs. Hamilton's eldest daughter to whom I have been married for nine years.* Thus was I indebted to Burns for a connexion from which I have derived, and expect further to derive, much happiness.

"During a residence of about ten days at Harvieston, we made excursions to various parts of the surrounding scenery, inferior to none in Scotland in beauty, sublimity, and romantic interest; particularly Castle Campbell, the ancient seat of the family of Argyll; and the famous cataract of the Devon, called the *Caldron-linn*; and the *Rumbling Bridge*, a single broad arch, thrown by the devil, if tradition is to be believed, across the river, at the height of about one hundred feet above its bed.

"A visit to Mrs. Bruce of Clackmannan, a lady above ninety, the lineal descendant of that race which gave the Scottish throne its brightest ornament, interested his feelings powerfully. This venerable dame, with characteristic dignity informed me on my observing that I believed she was descended from the family of Robert Bruce, that Robert Bruce was sprung from her family. Though almost deprived of speech by a paralytic affection, she preserved her hospitality and urbanity. She was in possession of the hero's helmet and two-handed sword, with which she conferred on Burns and myself the honor of knighthood, remarking that she had a

* Marriage—16th November 1789. At Harvieston, Dr. James M'Kittrick Adair, to Miss Charlotte Hamilton. Dr. Adair died at Harrowgate in 1802, and his widow in 1806.

better right to confer that title than *some people*.* You will of course conclude that the old lady's political tenets were as Jacobital as the poet's, a conformity which contributed not a little to the cordiality of our reception and entertainment. She gave us her first toast after dinner, "Awa' Uncos," or Away with the Strangers! Who these strangers were, you will readily understand.

"At Dunfermline we visited the ruined abbey, and the abbey church, now consecrated to Presbyterian worship. Here I mounted the cutty stool, or stool of repentance, assuming the character of a penitent for fornication; while Burns, from the pulpit addressed to me a ludicrous reproof and exhortation, parodied from that which had been delivered to himself in Ayrshire, where he had, as he assured me, once been one of seven who mounted the *seat of shame* together.

"In the church, two broad flag-stones marked the grave of Robert Bruce for whose memory Burns had more than common veneration. He knelt and kissed the stone with sacred fervor, and heartily (*suus ut mos erat*) execrated the worse than Gothic neglect of the first of Scottish heroes."

Dr. Adair makes no reference to two little excursions which Burns performed on his own account at this period, while Harvieston formed his head-quarters. A forenoon's ride would bring him to the Tusculum of Mr. J. Ramsay of Auchtertyre on the Teith, to whom he carried a letter of introduction from Dr. Blacklock. After a short visit to that gentleman, he departed under the promise to return in a few days and make a longer stay. The poet then proceeded to Ochtertyre in Strathearn, to accomplish a pre-concerted visit to Sir William Murray, whom he had met at Athole House. It was during his stay as guest of Sir William that he composed the fine verses "On scaring some water-fowl in Loch Turrit," and there also he produced the admired song "Blythe, blythe, and merry was she," † in compliment to Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, a young cousin of his host, who then lived at Ochtertyre House. He addressed a letter to each of his two friends, the classical teachers of the High School, from this beautiful retreat, both bearing the same date.

* This old lady lived in the ancient and now ruined fortalice called "Clackmannan Tower," overlooking the Firth of Forth at Alloa. She died in 1791, and the sword and helmet of Bruce fell appropriately into the hands of her kinsman, the Earl of Elgin, at whose mansion of Broomhall they are now preserved.

† Marriage—"Aug. 2, 1794. At Lintrose, the Hon. David Smyth of Methven, one of the Senators of the College of Justice, to Miss Euphemia Murray, daughter of Mungo Murray, Esq., of Lintrose."—*Scots Mag.*

(³) TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL, EDINBURGH.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

OCHTERTYRE, *Monday* [Oct. 15th, 1787.]

MY DEAR SIR,—I find myself very comfortable here, neither oppressed by ceremony nor mortified by neglect. Lady Augusta is a most engaging woman, and very happy in her family, which makes one's outgoings and incomings very agreeable. I called at Mr. Ramsay's of Auchtertyre as I came up the country, and am so delighted with him, that I shall certainly accept of his invitation to spend a day or two with him as I return. I leave this place on Wednesday or Thursday.

Make my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Cruickshank, and Mrs. Nicol, if she is returned. I am ever, dear Sir, your deeply indebted,

R. B.

(¹) MR. WILLIAM CRUICKSHANK, EDINBURGH.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

OCHTERTYRE, *Monday* [Oct. 15th, 1787.]

I HAVE nothing, my dear Sir, to write to you, but that I feel myself exceedingly comfortably situated in this good family—just notice enough to make me easy but not to embarrass me. I was storm-stayed two days at the foot of the Ochil Hills, with Mr. Tait of Harvieston and Mr. Johnston of Alva; but was so well pleased that I shall certainly spend a day on the banks of the Devon as I return. I leave this place, I suppose, on Wednesday, and shall devote a day to Mr. Ramsay of Auchtertyre near Stirling—a man to whose worth I cannot do justice. My respectful kind

compliments to Mrs. Cruickshank, and my dear little Jeanie; and if you see Mr. Masterton, please remember me to him. I am ever, my dear Sir, &c.

R. B.

After eight or ten luxurious days thus enjoyed in high society, amid scenery of the most inviting kind, the poet proceeded to fulfill his promise made to Mr. Ramsay, taking Harvieston by the way; for the attractions there—as shall afterwards appear—were more powerful than he cared to express. Tearing himself away, as we may suppose, from his interesting entertainers on the banks of the Devon, he made his way to the beautiful retreat of his lately acquired friend on the banks of the Teith. That gentleman, according to Mr. Lockhart, was “among the last of that old Scottish line of Latinists, which began with Buchanan, and (I fear) may be said to have ended with Gregory. Mr. Ramsay, among other eccentricities, had sprinkled the walls of his house with Latin inscriptions, some of them highly elegant, and these particularly interested Burns, who asked and obtained copies and translations of them. This amiable man (whose manners and residence were not, I take it, out of the novelist’s recollection, when he painted ‘Monkbarns,’) was deeply read in Scottish antiquities, and the author of some learned essays on the elder poetry of his country. His conversation must have delighted any man of talents; and Burns and he were mutually charmed with each other.” *

“When I asked him,” wrote Mr. Ramsay to Dr. Currie, “whether the Edinburgh *litterati* had mended his poems by their criticisms—‘Sir,’ said he, ‘those gentlemen remind me of some spinsters in my country who spin their thread so fine that it is fit for neither weft nor woof!’ . . . I have been in the company of many men of genius, some of them poets; but I never witnessed such flashes of intellectual brightness as from him, the impulse of the moment, sparks of celestial fire! I was never more delighted than with his company, two days tête-a-tête on this occasion.”

* “March 2nd, 1814.—Died John Ramsay of Auchtertyre”—*Scots Mag.* The Latin inscription above the door of his house, written in 1775, thus reads in English “On the banks of the Teith, in the small but sweet inheritance of my fathers, may I and mine live in peace, and die in joyful hope!” The little estate passed into the hands of Sir David Dundas, Q.C. whose death occurred on 30th March, 1877.

From the letter which follows we learn that Burns arrived in Edinburgh after his little tour, on 20th October, ill with a cold contracted during the journey.

(²) TO PATRICK MILLER, ESQ., DALSWINTON.

(CHAMBERS, 1851.)

EDINBURGH, *20th October 1787.*

SIR,—I was spending a few days at Sir William Murray's, Ochertyre, and did not get your obliging letter till to-day I came to town. I was still more unlucky in catching a miserable cold, for which the medical gentlemen have ordered me into close confinement, "under pain of death"—the severest of penalties. In two or three days, if I get better, and if I hear at your lodgings that you are still at Dalswinton, I will take a ride to Dumfries directly. From something in your last, I would wish to explain my idea of being your tenant. I want to be a farmer in a small farm, about a plough-gang, in a pleasant country, under the auspices of a good landlord. I have no foolish notion of being a tenant on easier terms than another. To find a farm where one can live at all is not easy—I only mean living soberly, like an old-style farmer, and joining personal industry. The banks of the Nith are as sweet poetic ground as any I ever saw; and besides, Sir, 'tis but justice to the feelings of my own heart, and the opinion of my best friends, to say that I would wish to call you landlord sooner than any landed gentleman I know. These are my views and wishes; and in whatever way you think best to lay out your farms, I shall be happy to rent one of them. I shall certainly be able to ride to Dalswinton about the middle of next week, if I hear that you are not gone,—I have the honor to be, Sir,—Your obliged humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

The poet's lodging in Edinburgh was now in St. James's Square, in the house of Nicol's High School colleague, Mr. William Cruickshank; and there he resided throughout his second winter in the city. His time was now much occupied in preparing songs for Vol. II. of Johnson's Museum, which appeared about the middle of February following. The following incident related by Professor Walker in his Memoir of Burns, refers to this period:—"About the end of October, I called for him at the house of a friend, whose daughter, though not more than twelve, was a considerable proficient in music. I found him seated by the harpsichord of this young lady, listening with the keenest interest to his own verses, which she sung and accompanied, and adjusting them to the music by repeated trials of the effect. In this occupation he was so totally absorbed, that it was difficult to draw his attention from it for a moment." The letter which follows, addressed to Mr. Hoy, the Duke of Gordon's Librarian (referred to in the journal of the Highland Tour), is another illustration of his eagerness to help Johnson's musical work.

(¹) TO JAMES HOY, ESQ., GORDON CASTLE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, *20th October 1787.*

SIR,—I will defend my conduct in giving you this trouble, on the best of Christian principles,—“Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.” I shall certainly, among my legacies, leave my latest curse to that unlucky predicament which hurried—tore me away from Castle Gordon. May that obstinate son of Latin prose be curst to Scotch-mile periods, and damned to seven-leagued paragraphs; while Declension and Conjugation, Gender, Number, and Tense, under the ragged banners of Dissonance and Disarrangement, eternally rank against him in hostile array.

Allow me, Sir, to strengthen the small claim I have to your acquaintance, by the following request. An

engraver, James Johnson, in Edinburgh, has, not from mercenary views, but from an honest Scotch enthusiasm, set about collecting all our native songs and setting them to music; particularly those that have never been set before. Clarke, the well-known musician, presides over the musical arrangement, and Drs. Beattie and Blacklock, Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, and your humble servant to the utmost of his small power, assist in collecting the old poetry, or sometimes for a fine air make a stanza, when it has no words. The brats (too tedious to mention) which claim a parental pang from my bardship, I suppose will appear in Johnson's second number—the first was published before my acquaintance with him. My request is—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen" is one intended for this number, and I beg a copy of his Grace of Gordon's words to it, which you were so kind as to repeat to me. You may be sure we won't prefix the author's name, except you like, though I look on it as no small merit to this work that the names of so many of the authors of our old Scotch songs, names almost forgotten, will be inserted. I do not well know where to write to you—I rather write at you: but if you will be so obliging, immediately on receipt of this, as to write me a few lines I shall perhaps pay you in kind, though not in quality. Johnson's terms are:—each number a handsome pocket volume, to consist of a hundred Scotch songs, with basses for the harp-sichord, &c. The price to subscribers, 5s.; to non-subscribers, 6s. He will have three numbers, I conjecture.

My direction, for two or three weeks, will be at Mr. William Cruickshank's, St. James's Square, New Town, Edinburgh,—I am, Sir, yours to command,

R. B.

(1) TO REV. JOHN SKINNER.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

EDINBURGH, *October 25, 1787.*

REVEREND AND VENERABLE SIR,—Accept, in plain dull prose, my most sincere thanks for the best poetical compliment I ever received. I assure you, Sir, as a poet, you have conjured up an airy demon of vanity in my fancy, which the best abilities in your other capacity would be ill able to lay. I regret, and while I live I shall regret, that when I was in the north, I had not the pleasure of paying a younger brother's dutiful respects to the author of the best Scotch song ever Scotland saw—"Tullochgorum's my delight!" The world may think slightly of the craft of song-making if they please, but, as Job says—"O that mine adversary had written a book!"—let them try. There is a certain something in the old Scotch songs, a wild happiness of thought and expression, which peculiarly marks them not only from English songs, but also from the modern efforts of song-wrights, in our native manner and language. The only remains of this enchantment, these spells of the imagination, rest with you. Our true brother, Ross of Lochlee, was likewise "owre cannie"—"a wild warlock"—but now he sings among the "sons of the morning."

I have often wished, and will certainly endeavor to form a kind of common acquaintance among all the genuine sons of Caledonian song. The world, busy in low prosaic pursuits, may overlook most of us; but "reverence thyself." The world is not our *peers*, so we challenge the jury. We can lash that world, and find ourselves a very great source of amusement and happiness independent of that world.

There is a work going on in Edinburgh just now which claims your best assistance. An engraver in this town has set about collecting and publishing all the Scotch songs, with the music, that can be found. Songs in the English language, if by Scotchmen, are admitted, but the music must all be Scotch. Drs. Beattie and Blacklock are lending a hand, and the first musician in the town presides over that department. I have been absolutely crazed about it, collecting old stanzas, and every information remaining respecting their origin, authors, &c., &c. This last is but a very fragment-business; but at the end of his second number—the first is already published—a small account will be given of the authors, particularly to preserve those of later times. Your three songs “Tullochgorum,” “John of Badenyon,” and “Ewie wi’ the Crookit Horn,” go into this second number. I was determined, before I got your letter, to write you, begging that you would let me know where the editions of these pieces may be found, as you would wish them to continue in future times; and if you be so kind to this undertaking as send any songs, of your own or others, that you would think proper to publish, your name will be inserted among the other authors,—“Nill ye, will ye.” One half of Scotland already give your songs to other authors. Paper is done. I beg to hear from you; the sooner the better, as I leave Edinburgh in a fortnight or three weeks—I am, with the warmest sincerity, Sir,—You obliged humble servant,

R. B.

The poetical compliment referred to in the opening sentence of the preceding letter was dated Linshart, 25th Sep., 1787, and consisted of eighteen stanzas and a “Postscript” in Scotch verse, which the worthy clergyman had penned after hearing from his son in Aberdeen that he had met with Burns at the house of Mr. Chalmers, printer there, on 10th

September. We shall quote only one stanza, as the piece is well known :—

“Sae proud’s I am that ye hae heard
 O’ my attempts to be a bard,
 And think my muse nae that ill-faur’d,
 Seil o’ your face!
 I wadna wish for mair reward,
 Than your good grace.”

The next of the bard’s letters in our programme bears date “September” in *Cromek’s Reliques*, through some mistake; but our date by internal evidence, must be the true one. It is the first that has been preserved of an extensive series of such interesting communications addressed by Burns to Miss Margaret, or rather, “Peggy” Chalmers, as he preferred to call her. The familiar style of this letter goes far to prove that it was not the beginning of such correspondence; and the reference to *Smeaton of Kilmaurs*, and to a “Mauchline sacrament” very significantly indicates that his correspondent was familiar with those localities and their peculiarities. (*See* letter to James Smith, p. 315 *supra*.) In thus addressing Miss Chalmers the poet writes as if his letters were intended for Charlotte Hamilton’s, as much as for Peggy’s perusal, writing to the latter individually as a matter of form, as if she were merely secretary of the Harvieston sisterhood. But a close observer will detect in these letters that Peggy has the soft side of his heart; while his admiration for Charlotte is (to use his own simile) of that kind “with which one regards the starry sky in a frosty December.” There is not a trace of his great ruling passion in the *one* song he composed in honor of Charlotte; while the “native grace” and “immortal charms” of Peggy are set off in his happiest manner in the three lyrics dedicated to her.

(¹) TO MISS CHALMERS, HARVIESTON.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDIN^a. Oct. 26, 1787.

I SEND Charlotte the first number of the songs; I would not wait for the second number; I hate delays in little marks of friendship, as I hate dissimulation in the language of the heart. I am determined to

pay Charlotte a poetic compliment, if I could hit on some glorious old Scotch air, in number second. You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper in the book ; but though Dr. Blacklock commended it very highly, I am not just satisfied with it myself. I intend to make it *description* of some kind : the whining cant of love, except in real passion, and by a masterly hand, is to me as insufferable as the preaching cant of old Father Smeaton, Whig-minister at Kilmaurs. Darts, flames, cupids, loves, graces, and all that farrago, are just a Mauchline sacrament—a senseless rabble.

I got an excellent poetic epistle yesternight from the old, venerable author of Tullochgorum, John of Badenyon, &c. I suppose you know he is a clergyman. It is by far the finest poetic compliment I ever got. I will send you a copy of it.

I go on Thursday or Friday to Dumfries to wait on Mr. Miller about his farms.—Do tell that to Lady Mackenzie, that she may give me credit for a little wisdom. “I Wisdom dwell with Prudence.” What a blessed fire-side ! How happy should I be to pass a winter evening under their venerable roof ! and smoke a pipe of tobacco, or drink water-gruel with them ! What solemn, lengthened, laughter-quashing gravity of phiz ! What sage remarks on the good-for-nothing sons and daughters of indiscretion and folly ! And what frugal lessons, as we straitened the fire-side circle, on the uses of the poker and tongs !

Miss Nimmo is very well, and begs to be remembered in the old way to you. I used all my eloquence, all the persuasive flourishes of the hand, and heart-melting modulation of periods in my power, to urge her out to Harvieston, but all in vain. My rhetoric seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind. I have seen the day—but that is a “tale of other years.”—In my conscience I believe

that my heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but grateful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'être un miserable esclave*: as for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure, permanent pleasure “which the world cannot give, nor take away,” I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth.

R. B.

(²) TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH, GLASGOW.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDINBURGH, Nov. 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—If once I were gone from this scene of hurry and dissipation, I promise myself the pleasure of that correspondence being renewed which has been so long broken. At present I have time for nothing. Dissipation and business engross every moment. I am engaged in assisting an honest Scotch enthusiast, a friend of mine, who is an engraver, and has taken it into his head to publish a collection of all our songs set to music, of which the words and music are done by Scotsmen. This, you will easily guess, is an undertaking exactly to my taste. I have collected, begged, borrowed, and stolen, all the songs I could meet with. “Pompey's Ghost,” words and music, I beg from you immediately, to go into his second number: the first is already published. I shall shew you the first number when I see you in Glasgow, which will be in a fortnight or less. Do be so

kind as to send me the song in a day or two: you cannot imagine how much it will oblige me.

Direct to me at Mr. W. Cruickshank's, St. James's Square, New Town, Edinburgh.

ROBT. BURNS.

The above letter we have every confidence in dating as above, from internal evidence, although the original is undated, and Chambers has placed it under February 1788. The song requested by Burns from his correspondent was apparently one which the latter used to sing while both were attending the Grammar School at Ayr, under John Murdoch in 1773, when neither of them were above fifteen years old. Burns had been led to believe that its author was John Lowe, the composer of "Mary's Dream;" but as we find the words in print at a period when Lowe was only emerging from boyhood, the claim of the latter to its authorship must be denied. Lowe was born in 1750, and died in 1798. He went to Edinburgh to attend the University in 1771, when he would find the piece called "Pompey's Ghost" in a standard collection styled "THE BLACKBIRD," edited by William Hunter, and bearing this imprint:—"Edinburgh. Printed by J. Bruce and Company: and sold by John Moir, Bookbinder in Bell's Wynd. —MDCCLXIV."

Mr. Candlish forwarded the words to Burns in reply, but regretted his inability to note down the music. He wrote thus:—"It is with the greatest sincerity I applaud your attempt to give the world a more correct and elegant collection of Scotch songs than has hitherto appeared If it is to be published by subscription, put down my name for a copy. My time this winter is very much employed—no less than ten hours a day. Expecting to see you soon, I am yours most sincerely

JAMES CANDLISH."

About this period, Burns received a letter from his old preceptor John Murdoch, dated from London on 28th October 1787. The poems of Robert Burns had been for some months the subject of admiration in London, before the worthy man could realize the fact that these were actually the work of the poor boy of that name who had been his pupil at Mount Oliphant. He wrote thus:—"If ever you come hither, you will have the satisfaction of seeing your poems relished by the Caledonians in London fully as much as they can be by

those of Edinburgh. We frequently repeat some of your verses in our Caledonian Society; and you may believe that I am not a little vain that I have had some share in cultivating such a genius. I was not absolutely certain that you were the author till a few days ago, when I made a visit to a Scotch lady resident here, a daughter of Dr. McComb, who told me that she was informed of it by a letter from her sister in Edinburgh, with whom you had been in company when in that capital. . . .

"May the father of the Universe bless you with all those principles and dispositions that the best of parents took such uncommon pains to instil into your mind from your earliest infancy! It is one of the greatest pleasures I promise myself before I die, that of seeing the family of a man whose memory I revere more than that of any person that ever I was acquainted with.—I am, my dear friend, yours sincerely.

JOHN MURDOCK."

Another Scotchman resident in London, Sir Gilbert Elliot (afterwards the first Earl of Minto), about this time wrote to his sister at Minto, on the same subject, thus:—"I have read about half of Burns's Poems, and am in the highest degree of admiration. I admire and wonder at his general knowledge of human character—of the manner, merits, and defects, of all ranks, and of many countries; the great justness, and also the great liberality of his judgment; and (what is most to be stared at) the uncommon refinement of his mind in all his views and opinions, and the uncommon refinement of his taste in composition. This, I say, seems more wonderful than genius, because one is apt to suppose Genius is *born* and Refinement is *acquired*. Now, granting his access to good books, yet consider the company he has lived in, and in how much worse than total solitude his mind has had to work and purify itself; consider how severe labor blunts the edge of every mind, and how the discomforts of poverty in a Scotch climate must cripple even Genius, and what a sedative it must be to imagination—nay, how much nearer even the *pleasures* of his rank must lead to sottishness than to elegance and wit! Thus we see what a victory mind has over matter, and how, in this prodigy, Will has dung Fate!"—*Life and letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, 1874.

(6) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP,

DUNLOP HOUSE, STEWARTON.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)*

MADAM,—I will bear the reproaches of my conscience respecting this letter no longer. I was indebted to you some time ago for a kind, long letter (your letters the longer the better), and again the other day I heard from you, enclosing a very friendly letter from Dr. Moore. I thought with myself, in the height of my gratitude and pride, of my remark that I would sit down some hour of inspiration, and write you a letter, at least worth twa groats; consequently you would have been a great gainer, as you are so benevolent as to bestow your epistolary correspondence on me (I am sure) without the least idea of being paid *in kind*.

When you talk of correspondence and friendship to me, Madam, you do me too much honor; but, as I shall soon be at my wonted leisure and rural occupation, if any remark on what I have read or seen, or any new rhyme I may twist, that is worth while—if such a letter, Madam, can give a person of your rank, information, and abilities any entertainment, you shall have it with all my heart and soul.

It requires no common exertion of good sense and philosophy in persons of elevated rank, to keep a friendship properly alive with one much their inferior. Externals, things totally extraneous of the man, steal upon the hearts and judgments of almost, if not altogether, all mankind; nor do I know more than one instance of a man who fully and truly regards “all the world as a stage, and all the men and women

* From the poet's holograph in possession of Frederick Locker, Esq., London.

merely players," and who (the dancing-school bow excepted) only values these players—the *dramatis personæ*, who build cities, and who rear hedges; who govern provinces, or superintend flocks, merely as they *act their parts*. For the honor of Ayrshire, this man is Professor Dugald Stewart of Catrine. To him I might perhaps add another instance, a Popish Bishop, Geddes;* but I have outraged that gloomy, fiery Presbyterianism enough already, though I don't spit in her lugubrious face by telling her that the first Cleric character I ever saw was a Roman Catholic.

I ever could ill endure those surly cubs of "chassard old night"—those ghostly beasts of prey who foul the hallowed ground of Religion with their nocturnal prowlings; but if the prosecution which I hear the Erebean fanatics are projecting against my learned and truly worthy friend, Dr. M'Gill,† goes on, I shall keep no measure with the savages, but fly at them with the *faucons* of Ridicule, or run them down with the bloodhounds of Satire, as lawful game wherever I start them.

I expect to leave Edin'. in eight or ten days, and shall certainly do myself the honor of calling at Dunlop House as I return to Ayrshire.—I have the honor to be, Madam, your obliged humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

EDIN^B. 4th Nov. 1787.

* This was Dr. John Geddes, coadjutor Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Edinburgh, who had procured subscriptions for the author's Edinburgh edition from five foreign Catholic seminaries, beginning with the Scots College at Valladolid, of which he had been for many years Rector. He had been introduced to Burns by Lord Monboddo.

† This is the first we hear of the poet's interest in the ecclesiastical prosecution of Dr. M'Gill, for alleged heresy, which afterwards occasioned the poem called "the Kirk's Alarm."

(2) TO JAMES HOY, Esq., GORDON CASTLE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINBURGH, 6th November, 1787.

DEAR SIR,—I would have wrote you immediately on receipt of your kind letter, but a mixed impulse of gratitude and esteem whispered to me that I ought to send you something by way of return. When a poet owes anything, particularly when he is indebted for good offices, the payment that usually recurs to him—the only coin indeed in which he probably is conversant—is rhyme. Johnson sends the books by the fly, as directed, and begs me to enclose his most grateful thanks: my return I intended should have been one or two poetic bagatelles which the world have not seen, or, perhaps, for obvious reasons, cannot see. These I shall send you before I leave Edinburgh. They may make you laugh a little, which, on the whole, is no bad way of spending one's precious hours and still more precious breath: at any rate, they will be, though a small, yet a very sincere mark of my respectful esteem for a gentleman whose further acquaintance I should look upon as a peculiar obligation.

The Duke's song, independent totally of his dukeship, charms me. There is I know not what of wild happiness of thought and expression peculiarly beautiful in the old Scottish song style, of which his Grace, old venerable Skinner, the author of "Tullochgorum," &c., and the late Ross, at Lochlee, of true Scottish poetic memory, are the only modern instances that I recollect, since Ramsay with his contemporaries, and poor Bob Fergusson went to the world of deathless existence and truly immortal song. The mob of mankind, that many-headed beast, would laugh at so serious a speech about an old song; but, as Job says,

"O that mine adversary had written a book!" Those who think that composing a Scotch song is a trifling business—let them try it.

I wish my Lord Duke would pay a proper attention to the Christian admonition—"Hide not your candle under a bushel," but "let your light shine before men." I could name half a dozen dukes that I guess are a devilish deal worse employed: nay, I question if there are half a dozen better: perhaps there are not half that scanty number whom Heaven has favored with the tuneful, happy, and, I will say, glorious gift.—I am, dear Sir,—Your obliged humble servant,

R. B.

(²) TO MISS CHALMERS, HARVIESTON.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDINB. 6th Nov. 1787.

MY DEAR MADAM,—I just now have read yours. The poetic compliments I pay cannot be misunderstood. They are neither of them so particular as to point you out to the world at large; and the circle of your acquaintances will allow all I have said. Besides, I have complimented you chiefly, almost solely, on your mental charms. Shall I be plain with you? I will; so look to it. Personal attractions, Madam, you have much above par; wit, understanding, and worth, you possess in the first class. This is a cursed flat way of telling you these truths, but let me hear no more of your sheepish timidity. I know the world a little. I know what they will say of my poems (by second sight, I suppose, for I am seldom out in my conjectures); and you may believe me, my dear Madam, I would not run any risk of hurting you by an ill-judged compliment. I wish to show to the world, the odds between a poet's friends and those of simple

prosemen. More for your information, *both* the pieces go in. One of them, "Where braving angry winter's storms," is already set—the tune is Neil Gow's lamentation for Abercarny; the other is to be set to an old Highland air in Daniel Dow's "Collection of ancient Scotch music;" the name is *Ha a Chaillich air mo Dheidh*. My treacherous memory has forgot every circumstance about *Les Incas*, only I think you mentioned them as being in Creech's possession. I shall ask him about it. I am afraid the song of "Somebody" will come too late—as I shall, for certain, leave town in a week for Ayrshire, and from that to Dumfries, but there my hopes are slender. I leave my direction in town, so any thing, wherever I am, will reach me.

I saw your's to —; it is not too severe, nor did he take it amiss. On the contrary, like a whipt spaniel he talks of being with you in the Christmas days. Mr. Tait has given him the invitation, and he is determined to accept of it. O selfishness! he owns in his sober moments, that from his own volatility of inclination, the circumstances in which he is situated, and his knowledge of his father's disposition, the whole affair is chimerical—yet he *will* gratify an idle *penchant* at the enormous, cruel expense of perhaps ruining the peace of the very woman for whom he professes the generous passion of love! He is a gentleman in his mind and manners—*tant pis!* He is a volatile school-boy: the heir of a man's fortune who well knows the value of two times two!

Perdition seize them and their fortunes, before they should make the amiable, the lovely — the derided object of their purse-proud contempt.

I am doubly happy to hear of Mrs. —'s recovery, because I really thought all was over with her. There are days of pleasure yet awaiting her.

"As I cam in by Glenap;
 I met with an aged woman;
 She bade me cheer up my heart,
 For the best o' my days was comin'."*

This day will decide my affairs with Creech. Things are, like myself, not what they ought to be; yet better than what they appear to be.

"Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings but Himself—
 That hideous sight—a naked human heart."

Farewell! remember me to Charlotte. R. B.

After the first week in November had passed, the poet seems to have made a second journey to Dumfriesshire to inspect Mr. Miller's farms, taking Ayrshire by the way. He mentions his return in the following letter to Miss Chalmers, which has no date attached to it in Cromek's Collection, where it first appeared. He was back to Edinburgh about the 17th of same month.

(³) TO MISS CHALMERS, HARVIESTON.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDIN., (Nov. 18,) 1787.

I HAVE been at Dumfries, and at one visit more shall be decided about a farm in that country. I am rather hopeless in it; but as my brother is an excellent farmer, and is, besides, an exceedingly prudent, sober man (qualities which are only a younger brother's fortune in our family), I am determined, if my Dumfries business fail me, to return into partnership with him, and at our leisure take another farm in the neighborhood. I assure you I look for high compliments from you and Charlotte on this very sage instance of my unfathomable, incomprehensible wisdom. Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her that I have, to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment, now com-

* Here the letter closes in Cromek's copy. The remainder first appeared in Cunningham's edition.

pleted.* The air is admirable: true old Highland. It was the tune of a Gaelic song which an Inverness lady sung me when I was there; and I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing; for it had never been set before. I am fixed that it shall go into Johnson's next number; so Charlotte and you need not spend your precious time in contradicting me. I won't say the poetry is first-rate; though I am convinced it is very well: and, what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only *sincere*, but *just*. R. B.

(⁴) TO MISS CHALMERS, HARVIESTON.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDIN., Nov. 21, 1787.

I HAVE one vexatious fault to the kindly-welcome, well-filled sheet which I owe to your and Charlotte's goodness—it contains too much sense, sentiment, and good-spelling. It is impossible that even you two, whom I declare to my God I will give credit for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate; so like those who, Shenstone says, retire because they have made a good speech, I shall, after a few letters, hear no more of you. I insist that you shall write whatever comes first: what you see, what you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or to fill up a corner, e'en put down a laugh at full length. Now none of your polite hints about flattery: I leave that to your lovers, if you have or shall have any; though, thank heaven, I have found at last two girls who can be luxuriantly happy in their own minds and with one another, without that commonly necessary appendage to female bliss, A LOVER.

* See "The Banks of the Devon," *supra*, p. 129.

Charlotte and you are just two favorite resting-places for my soul in her wanderings through the weary, thorny wilderness of this world—God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle : I glory in being a Poet, and I want to be thought a wise man—I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. “Some folk hae a hantle o’ fauts, an’ I’m but a ne’er-do-weel.”

Afternoon.—To close the melancholy reflections at the end of last sheet, I shall just add a piece of devotion commonly known in Carrick by the title of the “Wabster’s grace :”

“Some say we’re thieves, and e’en sae are we !
Some say we lie, and e’en sae do we !
Gude forgie us, and I hope sae will He !
Up and to your looms, lads.”

R. B.

TO MR. ROBT. AINSLIE, ST. JAMES’ SQUARE.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

SUNDAY MORNING, *Nov. 25, 1787.**

I BEG, my dear Sir, you will not make any appointment to take us to Mr. Ainslie’s † to-night. On looking over my engagements, constitution, present state of my health, some little vexatious soul concerns, &c., I find I can’t sup abroad to-night. I shall be in to-day till one o’clock, if you have a leisure hour.

You will think it romantic when I tell you, that I find the idea of your friendship almost necessary to my existence.—You assume a proper length of face in my bitter hours of blue-devilism, and you laugh fully up to my highest wishes at my good things. I don’t know, upon the whole, if you are one of the

* The poet’s MS. of this note is in the possession of Frederick Locker, Esq., author of “London Lyrics,” &c.

† This was Mr. Ainslie, Bookseller, a relative of Burns’s correspondent.

first fellows in God's world, but you are so to me. I tell you this just now, in the conviction that some inequalities in my temper and manner may perhaps sometimes make you suspect that I am not so warmly as I ought to be your friend,

R. B.

(¹) TO MR. BEUGO, ENGRAVER, PRINCES STREET.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

MY DEAR SIR,—A certain sour-faced old acquaintance called "Glauber's Salts" hinders me from my lesson to-night. To-morrow night I will not fail.

ROBT. BURNS.

ST. JAMES' SQUARE, *Tuesday Even.*

The original of the above little note is possessed by W. F. Watson, Esq., Edinburgh, who supposes that the date might be about March 1787, when Burns gave Beugo a few sittings while the engraving of his portrait was in progress. The address "St. James' Square," however, would imply a date considerably later; we suspect that he and Beugo had arranged to take an evening lesson together in Latin or French—most probably the latter, from Mr. Louis Cauvin, who resided near Jock's Lodge, and had a class-room in the city.

In regard to the short letter to Ainslie, the following extract from a communication which that gentleman addressed to the Ettrick Shepherd in 1834 will afford a full explanation:—"While the Poet was staying with Mr. Cruickshank in St. James' Square, I had then a small bachelor-house on the north side of the Square, and, intimate as we were, it may be supposed we spent many an hour together, and to me most agreeable they were. I remember one pleasant afternoon he came over to me after dinner: I was then but a Writer to the Signet's apprentice, but had already a cellar, though certainly not an extensive one; for it was no more than a window-bunker, and consisted but of five bottles of port—all that remained of a dozen which had been my last laid-in store. I was too hospitable not to offer a bottle to my friend—'No, no,' said Burns, giving me a kindly slap on the shoulder, 'we'll hae nae wine the day; we'll take a walk to Arthur Seat, and come in to a late tea.' We did so, and I almost

never found the poet so amusing, so instructive, and altogether so delightful, as he was in the charming stroll which we had together, and during the sober tea-drinking which followed it."

(¹) TO MISS MABANE,* EDINBURGH.

(STEWART'S "LETTERS OF BURNS TO CLARINDA," 1802.)

HERE have I sat, my dear Madam, in the stony attitude of perplexed study for fifteen vexatious minutes, my head askew, bending over the intended card, my fixed eye insensible to the very light of day poured around; my pendulous goose-feather, loaded with ink, hanging over the future letter; all for the important purpose of writing a complimentary card to accompany your trinket.

Compliment is such a miserable Greenland expression, and lies at such a chilly polar distance from the torrid zone of my constitution that I cannot, for the very soul of me, use it to any person for whom I have the twentieth part of the esteem every one must have for you who knows you.

As I leave town in three or four days, I can give myself the pleasure of calling on you only for a minute. Tuesday evening, sometime about seven or after, I shall wait on you for your farewell commands.

The hinge of your box I put into the hands of the proper connoisseur. The broken glass likewise went under review; but deliberative wisdom thought it would too much endanger the whole fabric [to replace it].— I am, dear Madam, with all sincerity of enthusiasm,—
Your very obed^t. servant, ROBT. BURNS.

Saturday Noon,
No. 2 ST. JAMES' SQUARE,
NEW TOWN, EDINBURGH. [1st Decem. 1787.]

* This lady became Mrs. Colonel Wright, but there is no tradition of any connecting link between her and Burns, except this short letter.

Burns had at length, early in December 1787 (after having in vain waited for a final settlement with Mr. Creech,) resolved on leaving Edinburgh, when an accident occurred which had the effect of detaining him for at least three months longer. A Miss Nimmo, residing in Allison Square, Potterrow, of whom the poet was an occasional visitor, (in respect she was the intimate friend of his correspondent Miss Chalmers), had a small tea-party in her house about the beginning of December, where he was a principal guest. Another "principal guest" on that occasion was Mrs. M'Lehose, a familiar acquaintance of Miss Nimmo, who after reading Burns's poems and hearing him so greatly spoken of, had earnestly pressed her friend to make them acquainted. The lady "had a pre-sentiment that both should derive pleasure from the society of each other," and the result of the interview was no disappointment. A "return" tea-party was arranged to take place in the house of Mrs. M'Lehose, which was only two hundred paces distant, at the opposite side of the Potterrow. Burns accepted the invitation to be present on the evening fixed—Thursday, 6th December—but the poet preferred a *tête-à-tête* interview; so instead of making appearance then, a letter came as his substitute, pleading that unforeseen necessity frustrated his intention; but that on Saturday evening he would make up for his own disappointment by waiting on her. However, as accident would have it, on the afternoon of Saturday, an unlucky fall from a coach seriously bruised one of his knees, making him a cripple, and thus began the long series of letters known as the "Correspondence with Clarinda." We have resolved to keep that correspondence apart from the poet's other letters, as forming a distinct episode in his history, the effect of which would be marred if interwoven with the general correspondence, which we shall therefore go on with, and introduce the "Clarinda Correspondence" entire, by way of interlude, at its proper place.

(^o) TO MISS CHALMERS, HARVIESTON.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDINBURGH, Dec. 12, 1787.

I AM here under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion; and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horror preceding a

midnight thunder-storm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably the lightest evil ; misfortune, bodily constitution, hell, and myself, have formed a "Quadruple Alliance" to guarantee the other. I got my fall on Saturday (Dec. 8), and am getting slowly better.

I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and am got through the five books of Moses, and half way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book.* I sent for my book binder to-day, and ordered him to get me an octavo Bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town ; and bind it with all the elegance of his craft.

I would give my best song to my worst enemy, I mean the merit of making it, to have you and Charlotte by me. You are angelic creatures, and would pour oil and wine into my wounded spirit.

I inclose you a proof copy of the "Banks of the Devon," which present with my best wishes to Charlotte. The "Ochil-hills" you shall probably have next week for yourself. None of your fine speeches !

R. B.

TO MR. FRANCIS HOWDEN,

JEWELLER, PARLIAMENT SQUARE.

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

THE bearer of this will deliver you a small shade to set ; which, my dear Sir, if you would highly oblige a poor cripple devil as I am at present, you will finish at furthest against to-morrow evening. It goes a hundred miles into the country ; and if it is at me by five o'clock to-morrow evening, I have an opportunity of a private hand to convey it ; if not, I don't know how to get it sent. Set it just as you

* His poems composed before this date display an intimate familiarity with these books.

did the others you did for me — “in the neatest and cheapest manner ; both to answer as a breast-pin, and with a ring to answer as a locket. Do despatch it ; as it is, I believe, the pledge of love, and perhaps the prelude to ma-tri-mo-ny. Everybody knows the auld wife’s observation when she saw a poor dog going to be hanged — “God help us ! it’s the gate we ha’e a’ to gang !”

The parties, one of them at least, is a very particular acquaintance of mine — the honest lover. He only needs a little of an advice which my grandmother, rest her soul, often gave me, and I as often neglected —

“Leuk twice or ye loup ance.”

Let me conjure you, my friend, by the bended bow of Cupid — by the unloosed cestus of Vestus — by the lighted torch of Hymen — that you will have the locket finished by the time mentioned ! And if your worship would have as much Christian charity as call with it yourself, and comfort a poor wretch, not wounded indeed by Cupid’s arrow, but bruised by a good, serious, agonising, damned, hard knock on the knee, you will gain the earnest prayers, when he does pray, of, dear Sir, your humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

ST. JAMES’ SQUARE, *No. 2, Attic Storey.*

Chambers remarks that the preceding “business note” shews how apt the mind of Burns was, “even on the most trivial subjects, to scintillate out vivid expressions and droll or fanciful ideas.”

On 13th December 1787 Lord President Dundas, of the Court of Session, died somewhat suddenly, and Burns was pressed by Mr. Charles Hay, advocate, (afterwards Lord Newton) one of the members of the Crochallan Club, to compose some elegiac verses on the occasion. Dr. Alexander Wood, the kind surgeon who attended to the poet’s bruised limb at that time, warmly seconded that proposal ; suggesting that the poetic compliment might lead to some beneficial results, through the powerful political influence of the Dundas family.

The poem was executed, and forwarded by the hands of Dr. Wood to the son of the deceased with the result which the reader will find narrated at page 138 *supra*.

TO CHARLES HAY, ESQ., ADVOCATE.

(CHAMBERS' PEOPLE'S ED., 1840.)

SIR,—The enclosed poem was written in consequence of your suggestion, last time I had the pleasure of seeing you. It cost me an hour or two of next morning's sleep, but did not please me; so it lay by, an ill-digested effort, till the other day that I gave it a critic brush. These kind of subjects are much hackneyed; and, besides, the wailings of the rhyming tribe over the ashes of the great are cursedly suspicious, and out of all character for sincerity. These ideas damped my Muse's fire; however, I have done the best I could, and, at all events, it gives me an opportunity of declaring that I have the honor to be, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

R. B.

(⁶) TO MISS CHALMERS, HARVIESTON.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDINBURGH, Dec. 19, 1787.

I BEGIN this letter in answer to yours of the 17th current, which is not yet cold since I read it. The atmosphere of my soul is vastly clearer than when I wrote you last. For the first time, yesterday I crossed the room on crutches. It would do your heart good to see my bardship, not on my poetic, but on my oaken stilts; throwing my best leg with an air! and with as much hilarity in my gait and countenance, as a May frog leaping across the newly harrowed ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth after the long expected shower!

I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see anywhere in my path that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre—Poverty ; attended as he always is by iron-fisted Oppression, and leering Contempt ; but I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-labored day already, and still my motto is—I DARE ! My worst enemy is *moi même*. I lie so miserably open to the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well-mounted banditti, under the banners of Imagination, Whim, Caprice, and Passion ; and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of Wisdom, Prudence, and Forethought move so very, very slow, that I am almost in a state of perpetual warfare, and, alas ! frequent defeat. There are just two creatures I would envy—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear.

R. B.

(1) TO MR. RICHARD BROWN, IRVINE.

(WALKER'S ED., 1811.)

EDINBURGH, 30th Dec. 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have met with few things in life which have given me more pleasure than Fortune's kindness to you since those days in which we met in the vale of misery ; as I can honestly say that I never knew a man who more truly deserved it, or to whom my heart more truly wished it. I have been much indebted since that time to your story and sentiments for steeling my mind against evils, of which I have had a pretty decent share. My Will-o'-wisp fate you know : do you recollect a Sunday we spent together in Eglinton Woods ? You told me, on my repeating some verses to you, that you wondered I could resist the temptation of sending verses of such merit to a

magazine. It was from this remark I derived that idea of my own pieces which encouraged me to endeavor at the character of a poet. I am happy to hear that you will be two or three months at home. As soon as a bruised limb will permit me, I shall return to Ayrshire, and we shall meet ; "and faith, I hope we'll not sit dumb, nor yet cast out !"

I have much to tell you "of men, their manners, and their ways ;" perhaps a little of the other sex. *Apropos*, I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Brown. There, I doubt not, my dear friend, but you have found substantial happiness. I expect to find you something of an altered, but not a different man ; the wild, bold, generous young fellow, composed into the steady affectionate husband, and the fond, careful parent. For me, I am just the same will-o'-wisp being I used to be. About the first and fourth quarters of the moon, I generally set in for the trade-wind of wisdom ; but about the full and change, I am the luckless victim of mad tornadoes, which blow me into Chaos. Almighty Love still reigns and revels in my bosom ; and I am at this moment ready to hang myself for a young Edinburgh widow, who has wit and wisdom more murderously fatal than the assassinating stiletto of the Sicilian bandit, or the poisoned arrow of the savage African. My highland dirk, that used to hang beside my crutches, I have removed into a neighboring closet, the key of which I cannot command, in case of spring-tide paroxysms. You may guess of her wit by the following verses she sent me the other day. My best compliment to my friend, Allan.—Adieu !

R. B.

The "Edinburgh widow" referred to in the above letter was, of course, Mrs. M'Lehose, who although not a widow, was a deserted wife. The verses given by Dr. Walker, who first published the letter, are those which appear in the *Clarinda* correspondence beginning,

"Talk not of Love, it gives me pain."

These stanzas, however, were not composed until after the date of the letter to Brown, so that we must infer they were introduced by Walker at hap-hazard from Johnson's Museum, where they were published in Feb. 1788. The reader will find the verses really forwarded to Brown, at page 141, *supra*.

(7) TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

. After six weeks' confinement, I am beginning to walk across the room. They have been six horrible weeks; anguish and low spirits made me unfit to read, write, or think.

I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer resigns his commission, for I would not take in any poor ignorant wretch by selling out. Lately I was a sixpenny private, and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough; now I march to the campaign, a starving cadet—a little more conspicuously wretched.

I am ashamed of all this; for though I do want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice.

As soon as I can bear the journey, which will be, I suppose, about the middle of next week, I leave Edinburgh; and soon after I shall pay my grateful duty at Dunlop House.

R. B.

EDINBURGH, 21st Jan., 1788 [*Monday*.]

(7) TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

[TUESDAY, 22d Jan. 1788.]

Now for that wayward, unfortunate thing, *myself*. I have broke measures with Creech, and last week I

wrote him a frosty, keen letter. He replied in terms of chastisement, and promised me upon his honor that I shall have the account on Monday ; but this is Tuesday, and yet I have not heard a word from him. God have mercy on me ! a poor, damned, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool ! The sport, the miserable victim of rebellious pride, hypochondriac imagination, agonising sensibility, and bedlam passion !

“ I wish that I were dead, but I’m no like to die ! ” I had lately “ a hairbreadth ’scape in the imminent deadly breach,” of love too. Thank my stars, I got off heart-whole, “ waur fleyed than hurt.”—Interruption.

I have this moment got a hint. . . . I fear I am something like—undone ;* but I hope the best. Come stubborn Pride and unshrinking Resolution, accompany me through this, to me, miserable world ! You must not desert me. Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching Regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn-hope. Seriously though, life presents me with but a melancholy path : but—my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on.

R. B.

(3) TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

(CURRIE, 1801.)

[EDIN^B. Jan. 1788.]

I KNOW your Lordship will disapprove of my ideas in a request I am going to make to you ; but I have weighed, long and seriously weighed, my situation,

* It is not, for certainty, known what was the unexpected, and disheartening intelligence that so seriously affected Burns at this time. Cunningham suggests “ a rumor of Creech’s insolvency,” but Chambers, who holds that Creech’s affairs did not then, nor at any time, justify suspicion of financial difficulties, is inclined to think that distressing news from home regarding Jean Armour’s predicament raised the present alarm in the poet’s mind. His letter to Mrs. Dunlop in August following, seems to support this theory : “ The time I was laid up a cripple in Edinburgh, she was literally turned out of doors, and I wrote to a friend to shelter her till my return.”

my hopes, and turn of mind, and am fully fixed to my scheme if I can possibly effectuate it. I wish to get into the Excise: I am told that your Lordship's interest will easily procure me the grant from the commissioners; and your Lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction. There, my Lord, you have bound me over to the highest gratitude.

My brother's farm is but a wretched lease, but I think he will probably weather out the remaining seven years of it; and after the assistance which I have given and will give him, to keep the family together, I think, by my guess, I shall have rather better than two hundred pounds; and instead of seeking, what is almost impossible at present to find, a farm that I can certainly live by, with so small a stock, I shall lodge this sum in a banking-house, a sacred deposit, excepting only the calls of uncommon distress or necessitous old age.

These, my Lord, are my views: I have resolved from the maturest deliberation; and now I am fixed, I shall leave no stone unturned to carry my resolve into execution. Your Lordship's patronage is the strength of my hopes; nor have I yet applied to anybody else. Indeed, my heart sinks within me at the idea of applying to any other of the Great who have honored me with their countenance. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation, and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise as the cold denial; but to your Lordship I have not only the honor, the comfort, but the pleasure of being—Your Lordship's much obliged and deeply indebted humble servant, R. B.

(¹) TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[EDINR. *Jan.* 1788.]

SIR,—When I had the honor of being introduced to you at Athole-house, I did not think so soon of asking a favor of you. When Lear, in Shakspeare, asked Old Kent why he wished to be in his service, he answers, “Because you have that in your face which I would fain call master.” For some such reason, Sir, do I now solicit your patronage. You know, I dare say, of an application I lately made to your Board to be admitted an officer of Excise. I have, according to form, been examined by a supervisor, and to-day I give in his certificate, with a request for an order for instructions. In this affair, if I succeed, I am afraid I shall but too much need a patronizing friend. Propriety of conduct as a man, and fidelity and attention as an officer, I dare engage for; but with any thing like business, except manual labor, I am totally unacquainted.

I had intended to have closed my late appearance on the stage of life, in the character of a country farmer; but after discharging some filial and fraternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner, which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man’s last and often best friend, rescued him.

I know, Sir, that to need your goodness, is to have a claim on it; may I, therefore, beg your patronage to forward me in this affair, till I be appointed to a division; where, by the help of rigid economy, I will try to support that independence so dear to my soul, but which has been too often so distant from my situation.

R. B.

Towards the middle of January the poet's limb was so far healed that he could go up and down stairs without the aid of a staff. He had consulted his kind medical attendant, Dr. Alex. Wood, in regard to his favorite scheme of entering into the Excise business, and that gentleman being on an intimate footing with several of the Commissioners, promised to help his views to the extent of his power. The above letters were accordingly written and delivered to the patrons to whom they are addressed; and patronage hunting occupied the poet's attention for a few days, with results such as might be anticipated. On Sunday 27th January, we have these results communicated to Clarinda, thus:—"I have almost given up the Excise idea. I have been just now to wait on a great person. . . . I have been questioned like a child about my matters, and blamed and schooled for my inscription on Stirling window. Come Clarinda! 'Come, curse me, Jacob; come, defy me, Israel!'"

(⁸) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

EDINR. 12th Feb. 1788.

SOME things in your late letters hurt me; not that *you say them*, but that *you mistake me*. Religion, my honored Madam, has not only been all my life my chief dependence, but my dearest enjoyment. I have indeed been the luckless victim of wayward follies; but, alas! I have ever been "more fool than knave." A mathematician without religion is a probable character; an irreligious poet is a monster. . . .

R. B.

(⁹) TO REV. JOHN SKINNER.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

EDINBURGH, Feb. 14th, 1788.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I have been a cripple now near three months, though I am getting vastly better, and have been very much hurried besides, or else I would have wrote you sooner. I must beg your pardon for the epistle you sent me appearing in the

Magazine. I had given a copy or two to some of my intimate friends, but did not know of the printing of it till the publication of the Magazine. However, as it does great honor to us both, you will forgive it.

The second volume of the songs I mentioned to you in my last is published to-day. I send you a copy, which I beg you will accept as a mark of the veneration I have long had, and shall ever have, for your character, and of the claim I make to your continued acquaintance. Your songs appear in the third volume, with your name in the index; as I assure you, Sir, I have heard your "*Tullochgorum*," particularly among our west country-folks given to many different names, and most commonly to the immortal author of "*The Minstrel*," who, indeed, never wrote anything superior to "*Gie's a sang, Montgomery cried*." Your brother* has promised me your verses to the Marquis of Huntly's reel, which certainly deserve a place in the collection. My kind host, Mr. Cruikshank, of the High School here, and said to be one of the best Latins in this age, begs me to make you his grateful acknowledgments for the entertainment he has got in a Latin publication of yours, that I borrowed for him from your acquaintance and much respected friend in this place, the Rev. Dr. Webster.† Mr. Cruikshank maintains that you write the best Latin since Buchanan. I leave Edinburgh to-morrow, but shall return in three weeks. Your song you mentioned in your last, to the tune of "*Dumbarton Drums*," and the other, which you say was done by a brother in trade of mine, a ploughman, I shall thank you for a copy of each.—I am ever, Reverend Sir, with the most respectful esteem and sincere veneration, yours,

R. B.

* Mr. James Skinner, W.S., half-brother of the author of *Tullochgorum*, and thirty years his junior. He died about 1848.

† An Episcopal clergyman in Edinburgh.

PREFACE TO VOL. II. OF JOHNSON'S MUSICAL MUSEUM.

"The Songs contained in this Volume, both music and poetry, are all of them the work of Scotsmen. Wherever the old words could be recovered, they have been preferred; both as generally suiting better the genius of the tunes, and to preserve the productions of these earlier Sons of the Scottish Muse, some of whose names deserved a better fate than has befallen them—"Buried 'midst the wreck of things which were." Of our more modern Songs, the Editor has inserted the Authors' names, as far as he could ascertain them; and as that was neglected in the first Volume, it is annexed here. If he have made any mistakes in this affair, which he possibly may, he shall be very grateful at being set right.

"Ignorance and Prejudice may perhaps affect to sneer at the simplicity of the poetry or music of some of these pieces; but their having been for ages the favorites of Nature's Judges—the Common People—was to the Editor a sufficient test of their merit."

"EDIN., *March* 1, 1788."

(2) TO MR. RICHARD BROWN, GREENOCK.

(WALKER'S ED., 1811.)

EDIN., 15th Feb. 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received yours with the greatest pleasure. I shall arrive at Glasgow on Monday evening; and beg, if possible, you will meet me on Tuesday. I shall wait on you Tuesday all day. I shall be found at Durie's Black Bull Inn. I am hurried as if hunted by fifty devils, else I should go to Greenock; but if you cannot possibly come, write me, if possible, to Glasgow on Monday; or direct to me at Mossgiel by Mauchline; and name a day and place in Ayrshire, within a fortnight from this date, where I may meet you. I only stay a fortnight in Ayrshire, and return to Edinburgh.—I am ever, my dearest friend, yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

(⁸) TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

EDIN., Sunday, [Feb. 17, 1788.]

TO-MORROW, my dear Madam, I leave Edinburgh. I have altered all my plans of future life. A farm that I could live in, I could not find; and indeed, after the necessary support my brother and the rest of the family required, I could not venture on farming in that style suitable to my feelings. You will condemn me for the next step I have taken: I have entered into the Excise. I stay in the west about three weeks, and then return to Edinburgh for six weeks' instructions; afterwards, for I get employ instantly, I go, *où il plaît à Dieu—et mon roi*. I have chosen this, my dear Friend, after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of Fortune's palace shall we enter in, but what doors does she open to us? I was not likely to get anything to do. I wanted *un bât*, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on, or mortifying solicitation; it is immediate bread; and though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my preceding life; besides, the Commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends.

R. B.

(¹) TO MRS. ROSE, OF KILRAVOCK.*

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

EDINBURGH, 17th February 1788.

MADAM,—You are much indebted to some indispensable business I have had on my hands, otherwise,

* Mrs. Rose, a most accomplished amiable woman, was the representative of a very ancient Inverness family; with which, by his mother's side, Henry Mackenzie, author of "The Man of Feeling," was connected. The "dear little angel" referred to was Hugh, who lived to be twentieth laird of Kilravock; "my venerable friend," Mrs. Rose's mother; and the "two fair spirits of the hill," Miss Ross and a Miss Brodie.—See page 339, *supra*.

my gratitude threatened such a return for your obliging favor as would have tired your patience.* It but poorly expresses my feelings to say, that I am sensible of your kindness; it may be said of hearts such as yours is, and such, I hope, mine is, much more justly than Addison applies it,—

“Some souls by instinct to each other turn.”

There was something in my reception at Kilravock so different from the cold, obsequious, dancing-school bow of politeness, that it almost got into my head that friendship had occupied her ground without the intermediate march of acquaintance. I wish I could transcribe, or rather transfuse into language, the glow of my heart when I read your letter. My ready fancy, with colors more mellow than life itself, painted the beautifully wild scenery of Kilravock—the venerable grandeur of the castle—the spreading woods—the winding river, gladly leaving his unsightly, heathy source, and lingering with apparent delight as he passes the fairy walk at the bottom of the garden;—your late distressful anxieties—your present enjoyments—your dear little angel, the pride of your hopes;—my aged friend, venerable in worth and years, whose loyalty and other virtues will strongly entitle her to the support of the Almighty Spirit here, and His peculiar favor in a happier state of existence. You cannot imagine, Madam, how much such feelings delight me: they are my dearest proofs of my own immortality. Should I never revisit the north, as probably I never will, nor again see your hospitable mansion, were I, some twenty years hence, to see your little

* Dr. Currie printed a letter addressed to Burns by this lady (Mrs. Rose, jun.), dated 30th Nov. 1787. The poet's allusions throughout the text are a reply to that letter. She had enclosed some Gaelic airs with the native words which were supplied by “one of the fair spirits of the hill of Kildrummie.” These, although in Gaelic, are not inscribed in a language “unknown” to you. “The language of love is a universal one, which seems to have escaped the confusion of Babel, and to be understood by all nations.”

fellow's name making a proper figure in a newspaper paragraph, my heart would bound with pleasure.

I am assisting a friend in a collection of Scottish songs, set to their proper tunes; every air worth preserving is to be included: among others I have given "Morag," and some few Highland airs which pleased me most, a dress which will be more generally known, though far, far inferior in real merit. As a small mark of my grateful esteem, I beg leave to present you with a copy of the work so far as it is printed: the "Man of Feeling," that first of men, has promised to transmit it by the first opportunity.

I beg to be remembered most respectfully to my venerable friend, and to your little Highland chieftain. When you see the "two fair spirits of the hill," at Kildrummy, tell them that I have done myself the honor of setting myself down as one of their admirers for at least twenty years to come, consequently they must look upon me as an acquaintance for the same period; but as the Apostle Paul says, "this I ask of grace, not of debt."—I have the honor to be, Madam, &c.,

ROBT. BURNS.

Burns was at length enabled to leave Edinburgh, at this time, on Monday 18th February. At Glasgow he met Mr. Richard Brown, and also William Burns, his youngest brother. In Paisley he spent a day with Mr. Pattison, his correspondent of the preceding May, from which town he proceeded to Dunlop House, where he remained nearly two days. He then took Kilmarnock by the way, tarrying with Mr. Robert Muir and other friends there over Friday, and reached Mossgiel on Saturday the 23rd.

(³) TO MR. RICHARD BROWN, GREENOCK.

(WALKER'S ED., 1811.)

MOSSGIEL, 24th February 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot get the proper direction for my friend in Jamaica, but the following will do:—

To Mr. Jo. Hutchinson, at Jo. Brownrigg's, Esq., care of Mr. Benjamin Henriquez, merchant, Orange Street, Kingston. I arrived here, at my brother's, only yesterday, after fighting my way through Paisley and Kilmarnock, against those old powerful foes of mine, the devil, the world, and the flesh—so terrible in the fields of dissipation. I have met with few incidents in my life which gave me so much pleasure as meeting you in Glasgow. There is a time of life beyond which we cannot form a tie worth the name of friendship. "O youth! enchanting stage, profusely blest."* Life is a fairy scene; almost all that deserves the name of enjoyment or pleasure is only a charming delusion; and in comes repining age in all the gravity of hoary wisdom, and wretchedly chases away the bewitching phantom. When I think of life, I resolve to keep a strict look-out in the course of economy, for the sake of worldly convenience and independence of mind: to cultivate intimacy with a few of the companions of youth, that they may be the friends of age; never to refuse my liquorish humor a handful of the sweetmeats of life, when they come not too dear; and, for Futurity—

"The present moment is our <i>ain</i> ,	own
The <i>niest</i> we never saw!"	next

How like you my philosophy? Give my best compliments to Mrs. B., and believe me to be,—My dear Sir, yours most truly,

ROBT. BURNS.

On Monday, 25th February, the poet, in company with Mr. John Tennant of Glenconner, "his own and his father's friend," proceeded to Dumfries to inspect Mr. Miller's farms in the neighborhood of Dalswinton; and under his advice, he selected Ellisland. At Cumnock in his homeward route he wrote to Clarinda on Sunday, 2nd March, assuring her that he would be in Edinburgh on the following week.

* This was, to the last, a favorite quotation of Clarinda.

(²) TO MR. WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MAUCHLINE, 3d March 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,—Apologies for not writing are frequently like apologies for not singing—the apology better than the song. I have fought my way severely through the savage hospitality of this country, [the object of all hosts being] to send every guest drunk to bed if they can.

I executed your commission in Glasgow, and I hope the cocoa came safe. 'Twas the same price and the very same kind as your former parcel, for the gentleman recollected your buying there perfectly well.

I should return my thanks for your — hospitality (I leave a blank for the epithet, as I know none can do it justice) to a poor, wayfaring bard, who was spent and almost overpowered fighting with prosaic wickedness in high places ; but I am afraid lest you should burn the letter whenever you come to the passage, so I pass over it in silence. I am just returned from visiting Mr. Miller's farm. The friend whom I told you I would take with me was highly pleased with the farm ; and as he is, without exception, the most intelligent farmer in the country, he has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans of life before me ; I shall balance them to the best of my judgment, and fix on the most eligible. I have written Mr. Miller, and shall wait on him when I come to town, which shall be the beginning or middle of next week ; I would be in sooner, but my unlucky knee is rather worse, and I fear for some time will scarcely stand the fatigue of my Excise instructions. I only mention these ideas to you ; and, indeed, except Mr. Ainslie, whom I intend writing to to-morrow, I will not write at all to Edinburgh till I return to it. I

would send my compliments to Mr. Nicol, but he would be hurt if he knew I wrote to anybody and not to him : so I shall only beg my best, kindest, kindest compliments to my worthy hostess and the sweet little Rose-bud.*

So soon as I am settled in the routine of life, either as an Excise-officer, or as a farmer, I propose myself great pleasure from a regular correspondence with the only man almost I ever saw who joined the most attentive prudence with the warmest generosity.

I am much interested for that best of men, Mr. Wood ; I hope he is in better health and spirits than when I saw him last.—I am ever, my dearest friend,
—Your obliged, humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

(⁵) TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE,

AT MR. SAM^L. MITCHELSON'S, W.S., CARRUBBER'S
CLOSE, EDINBURGH.

(*Partially published by CUNNINGHAM, 1834.*)

MAUCHLINE, 3d March 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am just returned from Mr. Miller's farm. My old friend whom I took with me was highly pleased with the bargain, and advised me to accept of it. He is the most intelligent, sensible farmer in this county, and his advice has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans before me. I shall endeavor to balance them to the best of my judgment, and fix on the most eligible. On the whole, I find Mr. Miller in the same favorable disposition as when I saw him last ; I shall in all probability turn farmer.

* This is a reference to the song—"A rosebud, by my early walk," of which his correspondent's youthful daughter was the heroine. It had been just published in the *Museum*.

I have been through sore tribulation, and under much buffeting of the Wicked One, since I came to this country. JEAN I found banished, like a martyr—*forlorn, destitute, and friendless*; all for the good old cause: I have reconciled her to her fate: I have reconciled her to her mother: I have taken her a room: I have taken her to my arms: I have given her a mahogany bed: I have given her a guinea; and I have embraced her till she rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But—as I always am on every occasion—I have been prudent and cautious to an astounding degree; I swore her, privately and solemnly, never to attempt any claim on me as a husband, even though any body should persuade her she had such a claim, which she had not, neither during my life, nor after my death. She did all this like a good girl, and O! what a peacemaker is &c., &c.

I shall be in Edinburgh the middle of next week. My farming ideas I shall keep private till I see. I got a letter from Clarinda yesterday, and she tells me she has got no letter of mine but one. Tell her that I wrote to her from Glasgow, from Kilmarnock, from Mauchline, and yesterday from Cumnock as I returned from Dumfries. Indeed, she is the only person in Edinburgh I have written to till this day. How are your soul and body putting up?—a little like man and wife, I suppose—Your faithful friend,

ROBT. BURNS.

The above letter may cause some surprise to the reader who has hitherto seen no more of it than Cunningham ventured to publish. Mr. Ainslie, to whom it is addressed, lived a few years after placing it in that biographer's hands to be used as discretion might dictate. Ainslie, as we have already seen, became a very pious man after sowing his wild oats: and it is almost a pity he did not evince the sincerity of his new professions by destroying this letter after transcribing its

innocent paragraphs. Unfortunately however, the holograph was allowed to get into the market, suffered to be privately printed and widely circulated, and it would be weak affectation now-a-days for any editor of Burns to ignore its existence. Chambers did not scruple to publish that portion of it which is most damaging to the poet's reputation, giving countenance to the idea that he never really respected Mrs. Burns, whom he has in more than one of his letters charged with "vulgarity of soul, and mercenary fawning." "I feel, for my part," says Chambers, "that this is one of the points of the poet's story in which he appears to the least advantage, and I cannot but rejoice on his account that he finally, and in no long time, adopted better views regarding Jean."

Before leaving Edinburgh on 18th Feb., the poet had communicated to Clarinda the fact that his Ayrshire mistress was again about to publish proofs of her intimacy with him. He had to confess to that object of his temporary worship that in the previous June, on his eclatant return from the city, "he flew," as John Wilson waggishly expresses it, "somewhat too fervently to

'Love's willing fetters, the arms of his Jean.'

On learning the fact that in mid-winter the poor girl had been ejected from her father's house, when her second transgression in that forbidden direction became manifest, Burns procured a temporary shelter for her under the roof of his kind friend Wm. Muir, the miller at Tarbolton. He had now (February 1788) established Jean in a lodging in Mauchline, and succeeded in obtaining the benefit of her mother's attendance in her delicate condition. His first care on reaching Mauchline on the morning of Saturday, 23rd Feb., was to visit the poor sufferer in that secret place of retirement; and his first leisure moments after arriving at Mossgiel were devoted to writing a letter to Clarinda describing his impressions resulting from the interview. That letter (which Chambers tells his readers "has not been preserved") we shall give in its proper connexion in "The Clarinda Episode." Jean's confinement occurred about 13th March, a few days after the poet's return to Edinburgh, to execute his lease of Ellisland, and to obtain an order for his Excise instructions. The result was a safe delivery of twin girls, who lived only a few days. The birth is not recorded in the parish books: but an entry in the poet's family register records the fact under a date, "3rd March," which this and the following letter prove to be an impossible one. Chambers does not conceal his surprise

that "even under the temptation of a fondness which had risen to extravagant altitudes, two persons so generous and upright in all the relations of life as Burns and Mrs. M'Lehose, should have been able to reconcile themselves to the sacrifice of this poor village girl."

(⁴) TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

(WALKER'S ED., 1811.)

MAUCHLINE, 7th March 1788.

I HAVE been out of the country, my dear Friend, and have not had an opportunity of writing till now, when I am afraid you will be gone out of the country too. I have been looking at farms, and, after all, perhaps I may settle in the character of a farmer. I have got so vicious a bent to idleness, and have ever been so little a man of business, that it will take no ordinary effort to bring my mind properly into the routine: but you will say a "great effort is worthy of you." I say so myself, and butter up my vanity with all the stimulating compliments I can think of. Men of grave, geometrical minds, the sons of "which was to be demonstrated," may cry up reason as much as they please; but I have always found an honest passion, or native instinct, the truest auxiliary in the warfare of this world. Reason almost always comes to me like an unlucky wife to a poor devil of a husband—just in sufficient time to add her reproaches to his other grievances.

I found Jean with her cargo very well laid in, but unfortunately moored almost at the mercy of wind and tide. I have towed her into a convenient harbor, where she may lie snug till she unload, and have taken the command myself, not ostensibly, but for a time in secret. I am gratified with your kind inquiries after her; as, after all, I may say with Othello—

"————— Excellent wretch,

Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee!"

I go for Edinburgh on Monday.—Yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

(9) TO MRS. DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

MOSSGIEL, 7th March, 1788.

MADAM,—The last paragraph in yours of the 30th February affected me most,* so I shall begin my answer where you ended your letter. That I am often a sinner with any little wit I have, I do confess; but I have taxed my recollection to no purpose, to find out when it was employed against you. I hate an ungenerous sarcasm, a great deal worse than I do the devil; at least as Milton describes him; and though I may be rascally enough to be sometimes guilty of it myself, I cannot endure it in others. You, my honored friend, who cannot appear in any light, but you are sure of being respectable—you can afford to pass by an occasion to display your wit, because you may depend for fame on your sense; or if you choose to be silent, you know you can rely on the gratitude of many and the esteem of all; but God help us who are wits or witlings by profession, if we stand not for fame there, we sink unsupported!

I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of Coila,† I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honor, as Dr. Beattie says to Ross the poet, of his muse Scota, from which, by the bye, I took the idea of Coila: 'Tis a poem of Beattie's in the Scots dialect, which perhaps you have never seen.

“Ye shak your head, but o' my fegs,
 Ye've set old Scota on her legs:
 Lang had she lien wi' buffs and flegs,
 Bombaz'd and dizzie,
 Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs,
 Waes me, poor hizzie!”

R. B.

* Mrs. Dunlop had addressed a letter to Burns at that date intimating that she had been informed the latter had ridiculed her.—*Currie*.

† A lady (daughter of Mrs. Dunlop) was making a picture from the description of Coila in the *Vision*.—*Currie*.

(7) TO MR ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK.

(STEWART, 1801.)

MOSSGIEL, 7th March 1788.

I HAVE partly changed my ideas, my dear friend, since I saw you. I took old Glenconner with me to Mr. Miller's farm, and he was so pleased with it, that I have wrote an offer to Mr. Miller, which, if he accepts, I shall sit down a plain farmer—the happiest of lives when a man can live by it. In this case I shall not stay in Edinburgh above a week. I set out on Monday, and would have come by Kilmarnock, but there are several small sums owing me for my first edition about Galston and Newmills, and I shall set off so early as to dispatch my business and reach Glasgow by night. When I return, I shall devote a forenoon or two to make some kind of acknowledgment for all the kindness I owe your friendship. Now that I hope to settle with some credit and comfort at home, there was not any friendship or friendly correspondence that promised me more pleasure than yours; I hope I will not be disappointed. I trust the spring will renew your shattered frame, and make your friends happy.* You and I have often agreed that life is no great blessing on the whole. The close of life, indeed, to a reasoning eye, is

“Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams
Athwart the gloom profound.”

But an honest man has nothing to fear. If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broke machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley, be it so; at least there is an end of pain, care, woes,

* April 22, 1788.—Died at Kilmarnock, Mr. Robert Muir of Loanfoot.—*Scots Mag.*

and wants: if that part of us called Mind does survive the apparent destruction of the man—away with the old-wife prejudices and tales! Every age and every nation has had a different set of stories; and as the many are always weak, of consequence, they have often, perhaps always, been deceived: a man conscious of having acted an honest part among his fellow-creatures—even granting that he may have been the sport at times of passions and instincts—he goes to a great unknown Being, who could have no other end in giving him existence but to make him happy; who gave him those passions and instincts, and well knows their force.

These, my worthy friend, are my ideas; and I know they are not far different from yours. It becomes a man of sense to think for himself; particularly in a case where all men are equally in the dark.

Those copies of mine you have on hand: please send ten of them to Mr. John Ballantine, of the Bank in Ayr; for the remainder, I'll write you about them from Glasgow.

Adieu, my dear Sir! God send us a cheerful meeting.

ROBT. BURNS.

(⁴) TO MR. WILLIAM NICOL, EDINBURGH (?) *

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MAUCHLINE, 7th March 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,—My life, since I saw you last, has been one continued hurry; that savage hospitality which knocks a man down with strong liquors is the devil. I have a sore warfare in this world—the devil,

* The address on back of this letter has been torn off, and there is some doubt as to the individual correspondent to whom it was written. Cunningham assigned it to Robert Ainslie; but on 3d of same month, as we have seen, Burns addressed a letter to that gentleman, communicating much the same information as is here conveyed. The recipient may have been either Nicol, Dunbar, Cleghorn, or Alexander Cunningham. See letter to Cruikshank, 3d March, 1788.

the world, and the flesh are three formidable foes. The first, I generally try to fly from; the second, alas! generally flies from me; but the third is my plague—worse than the ten plagues of Egypt.

I have been looking over several farms in this country; one in particular, in Nithsdale, pleased me so well, that if my offer to the proprietor is accepted, I shall commence farmer at Whitsunday. If farming do not appear eligible, I shall have recourse to my other shift; but this to a friend.

I set out for Edin^r., on Monday morning; how long I stay there is uncertain, but you will know so soon as I can inform you myself. However, I determine poesy must be laid aside for some time; my mind has been vitiated by idleness, and it will take a good deal of effort to habituate it to the routine of business.—I am ever, my Dear Sir, Yours sincerely,

ROBT. BURNS.

The poet seems to have left Ayrshire on 10th March, according to the intention expressed above. It is not known if he tarried by the way in the neighborhood of Biggar; but it is certain that he signed the lease of Ellisland on 13th March, and forthwith set about the completion of his arrangements for entering on Excise work. Besides settling accounts with Mr. Creech, a good deal of intercourse and correspondence with Clarinda occupied the remaining portion of his ten days' stay in the city on that occasion.

(⁹) MISS MARGARET CHALMERS, HARVIES-
TON.

(CROMEK 1808.)

EDINBURGH, 14th March 1788.

I KNOW, my ever dear friend, that you will be pleased with the news when I tell you, I have at last taken a lease of a farm. Yesternight I completed a bargain with Mr. Miller, of Dalswinton, for the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, between five

and six miles above Dumfries. I begin at Whitsunday to build a house, drive lime, &c., and heaven be my help ! for it will take a strong effort to bring my mind into the routine of business. I have discharged all the army of my former pursuits, fancies and pleasures ; a motley host ! and have literally and strictly retained only the ideas of a few friends, which I have incorporated into a life-guard. I trust in Dr. Johnson's observation, "Where much is attempted, something is done." Firmness both in sufferance and exertion, is a character I would wish to be thought to possess ; and have always despised the whining yelp of complaint, and the cowardly, feeble resolve. . . .

Poor Miss K.* is ailing a good deal this winter, and begged me to remember her to you the first time I wrote to you. Surely woman, amiable woman, is often made in vain ! Too delicately formed for the rougher pursuits of ambition ; too noble for the dirt of avarice, and even too gentle for the rage of pleasure : formed indeed for and highly susceptible of enjoyment and rapture ; but that enjoyment, alas ! almost wholly at the mercy of the caprice, malevolence, stupidity, or wickedness of an animal at all times comparatively unfeeling, and often brutal.

R. B.

After a farewell interview with Clarinda on the night of Saturday 22nd March, which may be regarded as the close of that eccentric interlude in the drama of his life, Burns left Edinburgh on Monday 24th March, proceeding to Dumfriesshire by way of Glasgow, where he tarried two days, waiting (as we suppose) the arrival of his mare, Jenny Geddes. The object of his journey was to complete some arrangements concerning his future farm ; and so rapid were his movements, that he was back to Mauchline within a week from the day he left Edinburgh. His new landlord, Mr. Patrick Miller (brother of the Lord Justice Clerk) had purchased the estate of Dalswinton in 1785. Besides the grounds in connexion

* Miss Kennedy was a sister of Mrs. Gavin Hamilton, and survived Burns nearly forty years. She was considerably upwards of ninety when she died.

with the mansion house, it embraced several farms; three of which were respectively named Bankhead, Foregirth, and Ellisland. Burns had his choice of these; but, as we have seen, he was advised to take Ellisland, on the opposite side of the Nith from Dalswinton. Allan Cunningham has recorded his opinion, that if the poet had selected Foregirth, the speculation might have proved a profitable one; as the tenant who afterwards possessed it became wealthy by his farming of it. Mr. Miller himself, however gave no very flattering account of the soil which composed his estate. In a letter, dated 24th Sep. 1810, which was published in a "General View of the Agriculture of Dumfriesshire," he thus wrote:—"When I purchased the estate, I had not seen it; and when I went to view my purchase, I found it in the most miserable state of exhaustion, and all the tenants in poverty. I was so much disgusted for eight or ten days, that I then never meant to return to that county." *

The poet's lease of Ellisland extended to seventy-six years, at an annual rent of £50 for the first three years, and £70 per annum during the remainder; at same time a sum of £300 was stipulated to be granted by the landlord to build a new farm-steading, and to enclose the fields. Four harvests, however, were all that Burns was fated to reap from that soil. From the beginning he had his misgivings—"I daresay Mr. Miller means to favor me; yet it may turn out an advantageous bargain that may ruin me." And even when by old Glenconner's advice he selected Ellisland, he informed Ainslie that "the advice had staggered him a good deal." It was this feeling of insecurity which made him cling so eagerly to the notion of being an exciseman.

The letter of instruction by the Board of Excise to the officer who trained Burns for his forthcoming duties was dated 31st March 1788, and the poet steadily engaged in his course of drill at Tarbolton or its neighborhood, so as to enable him to remove to Ellisland early in June.

* Mr. Miller, son of Captain Patrick Miller, ruined himself in improving his estate of Dalswinton. Whatever may have been the condition of Bankhead and Foregirth when Burns first saw them, they became afterwards two of the finest and most productive farms in Nithsdale. Ellisland was naturally poorer than either of the other two.—J. H.

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